



# The Menorah

**Notes from the Rabbi: Ethan Seidel**

## Can We Recycle Old Copies of Biblical Texts?

In Tifereth Israel's attic, we have many boxes filled with xeroxed, plastic-spiral-bound booklets. These booklets were created for the Havurah (nee "Alternative") service over many years.

Many of them contain the full Hebrew text of the *parashah*, along with a modern translation and commentary -- this is because in the days of the Alternative service, the only commentary and translation available in our pews was the old Hertz *Humash*. (Frustration with the archaic translation and defensive commentary found in the Hertz *Humash* may well have been a factor in the creation of the Alternative service.)

The Havurah service is no longer. However, for most of the *parashiyot* in the

Torah, we still have 60 or more copies of a specially xeroxed booklet sitting in our attic.

Those cleaning out the TI attic recently asked me: can we recycle those old booklets? Or do we need to treat them as holy books, and bury all of them in a genizah, as we Jews have done since ancient times?

To help answer this question, I turned to the proceedings of our Conservative

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**President's Column: Susan Catler**

## New Sound System in Sanctuary

Tifereth Israel has a new sound system in the Wolman sanctuary! The new state-of-the-art system does not rely on speakers in the ceiling or ancient microphones, controls and cables, and allows everyone to hear what is said no matter where they are sitting. We have a wonderful service and great *drashot* – and now we can all hear them!

Our congregation relies on volunteers, staff and donors to make a project like this come to fruition. When we officially inaugurate the new sound system on Saturday morning, April 30, we will thank those who made this improvement in the synagogue's quality of life and sound possible – those who made financial contributions and those who planned and executed those plans.



We thank the following for their generous contributions to the sound system: Jon Alterman & Kathy LaRiviere, Len Bachman, Mark & Mona Berch, Nat Bottigheimer & Eve Ostriker, Joel Cohen, Avi Dorot & Ann Cohen, Sharon Doner Feldman, Bill & Miriam Galston, Marcia Goldberg, Myrna Goldman, Steve and

*(Continued on page 3)*



## Notes from the Rabbi (continued)

Movement's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, where I found (at <http://rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/public/halakhah/teshuvot/20012004/Reisner%20Shemot.pdf>) an in-depth (30 pages) responsum by Rabbi Avram Reisner touching on this question.

The halachic literature on this issue is extensive, and interesting. Without getting into too much detail, let me outline a few of the angles his responsum considers:

1. Granted that a hand-written name of God should be treated with respect, and buried (in most cases), what about a name of God that has been printed in a book?

If you think that it's obvious that a printed name has the same sanctity as a hand-written name, then why can't a Torah scroll for use in services be printed instead of hand-written? And note that each time a *sofer* (scribe)

writes the name of God in the Torah, he has to have the correct *kavvanah* (intention). Surely the *kavvanah* associated with a printed name is not nearly the same as the *kavvanah* associated with a hand-written name!

2. And is a spiral-bound booklet a book? Does its temporary nature, and the extremely tenuous connection of the final product with any original intent to write God's name, give us room for leniency?

3. Note that there are really two halachic issues here. One is the prohibition of erasing God's name, mentioned above. But there is also the sanctity that we have traditionally ascribed to *any* holy book, even if God's name is not in it.

It turns out that even before the days of xeroxing, printing presses were often faced with reams of paper that had been printed with holy books, but never bound. These presses were given permission to recycle this paper to use in new holy books.

4. What about abbreviations of God's name? What about God's name in other languages? (These questions are easier, at least for us Conservative Jews: such abbreviations, translations, or even transliteration, are not considered holy, and do not require special disposal.)

5. Then there's the issue of *grama*, the Aramaic word for acts that are done indirectly. We sometimes permit otherwise forbidden actions if there are other values involved and the action is done indirectly.

For example, persons who need to go to the mikveh, but who have a name of God written on their skin, are permitted to immerse themselves, despite the fact that, indirectly, God's name might be erased by this immersion.

In our case, might the positive value of recycling, especially if we ourselves were not doing the shredding, but merely putting the material in a recycling bin, trump the prohibitions mentioned above?

My feeling is that, given Rabbi Reisner's reasoning in his teshuvah, we can recycle the booklets in our attic. But I'm interested to hear your views on the subject.

Take a look at the teshuvah yourself, and tell me what you think!

Rabbi Seidel

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## New Members

### Jared Garelick

Like some political parties claim to be, TI is becoming a big tent, or *ohel gadol* as the patriarchs used to say. There are members now who attend services at TI regularly, yet rarely set foot in the sanctuary.

That explains who all those people are who show up at Kiddush in the Cherner around noon. Take a stroll through the building some Shabbat morning. You might see some of our new members.

#### Lee and Brenda Footer

Lee and Brenda recently moved from the District to Silver Spring, and decided to look at synagogues in the area. Lee, originally from Dayton, Ohio, is a long-time Hill staffer who works on the personal staff of a member of Congress from Florida.

Brenda, who grew up in New Jersey and Texas, is a preschool teacher at the Gan at Adas Israel, another conservative synagogue in the District.

The Footers first came to TI for a friend's baby naming. Liking it, they joined in time for the High Holidays last year, attending the downstairs service.

They are looking forward to the changes in that service this coming year. They and their eight-year-old daughter,

Naomi, have become regulars at TI's new family Shabbat services, in which Naomi enjoys participating. On Sunday mornings during the season, you can find Lee at a JCC softball league game.

#### Daniel Michelson-Horowitz

Daniel moved to Washington almost four years ago, to teach for a year in the Teach for America program. But that, as he describes it, was several lifetimes ago. After that, he worked on the Obama campaign, stationed in Ohio, where his efforts were successful though not highly -paid.

He later worked as a paralegal, worked abroad as a volunteer, and now is finishing his first year of law school at Georgetown. Appropriately, Daniel was in the library studying when he took this reporter's telephone call.

Daniel regularly attends the Segulah minyan that now meets bi-weekly at TI, and has many friends in the minyan. In fact, he has yet to attend a Shabbat service in the sanctuary. Still, TI is now his shul.

Trivia note: Daniel is not the first generation of hyphenated-Horowitz. He is descended from the Horowitz-Margareten family; his grandfather grew up in an apartment above the matzoh factory in New York.

## President's Column (continued)

Shelly Heller, Jason & Devora Kimelman-Block, Michael & Lisa Kraft, Michael & Iris Lav, John & Lynne List, Stephen Marcus & Renee Matalon, Joseph & Paula Martin, Ethan Merlin & Joelle Novey, Jonah & Stephanie Murdock, Ray & Adele Natter, Mark Novak & Renee Brachfeld, Lee & Hedy Ohringer, Keith Secular & Susan Catler, Bernie & Debra Shleien, David & Rona Siskind, Mike Tilchin & Linda Greer, Dan & Allison Turner, Mark Verschell & Elizabeth Leff, Dov Weitman & Sylvia Horwitz, Alan & Cynthia Weitz, and Howard & Barbara White.

Without members willing to contribute beyond their dues obligations we would not be able to make improvements beneficial to all.

We also thank those who worked to make the new sound system a reality. Without Carl Bergman's research and lobbying we would not have begun the renovation. Mark Verschell and David Zinner led the team that worked with

the contractor to tailor the plans to our needs and budget. Jon Alterman raised the money to make it possible. We are very grateful for everyone's efforts.

One reason we chose April 30 to recognize our new sound system is that it is also New Member Shabbat, when we welcome new members who joined in the last year. For a congregation to thrive it must not only continually maintain and improve the physical surroundings of the synagogue but also inspire new people to join by what is done in those surroundings.

Once they join we must take time to welcome them and continually work to include them in all aspects of our community. We want them to become comfortable here and full participants in the life of our synagogue. Please join us on April 30 to recognize and celebrate all who make our congregation grow and thrive.

## Summary of TI Board of Directors Meetings March 13 and 28, 2011

### March 13 Meeting

#### Youth Programs

Eitan Gutin discussed plans to transform our youth programs. Next year we will move from a "social activities youth group" model to a "community of youth" model.

The 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders will be trained as *madrichim*, to help in classrooms and to run Shabbat services and activities for younger children. The goal is to give them a community to run. The leadership of the USY chapter will be central to this effort.

For the 6-8<sup>th</sup> graders, spaces will be set up for them to hang out and they will start to see what it's like to build a community. We will focus on Shabbat, from mid-day through early afternoon as a time to get together. We will be running the program with both the USY and Kadima advisors. One of these "youth professionals" will be here every Shabbat.

In addition to the advantages to the 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders of developing a community, and leadership and community-building skills, this model benefits parents and TI. While children are engaged during and after Kiddush, parents will be able to be with other adults, enhancing our adult community.

As there has been a problem with supervision of younger children, resulting in petty vandalism and destruction of property, the synagogue will benefit by increased supervision throughout Shabbat. Youth activities will continue on other days, especially programs that cannot be held on Shabbat.

#### New Sound System, Front Doors

Mark Verschell reported that a contract has been signed with Cardinal Sound to replace the sound system in the sanctuary. When the parts are in, we will have a firm installation date.

The money for this project was raised from congregational donors. Jon Alterman led the fundraising. The planning has taken significant effort over a considerable period of time, especially from Carl Bergman.

The 16<sup>th</sup> Street doors have been repaired. All the old hardware was removed and new hardware was installed. Each door has all new brushes and weather stripping. The money came from the Building Preservation Fund.

#### Cherner High Holiday Services

Rabbi Seidel reviewed the history of the downstairs services during the High Holy Day and then discussed the plan the High Holy Day committee is proposing: tweaking our downstairs service into an adult, family-friendly service, led by Eitan Gutin (with much participation, in the TI style, from TI'ers of all ages).

The idea is to develop a service that will work both for the regulars downstairs, as well as the families who have been enjoying the Family Service we started two years ago.

The Board discussed the concept at length. Eitan Gutin suggested calling the service "B'yachad" (together). Part of the program will focus on adult needs and part will focus on family needs. The details are not worked out. The goal will be to have

a service that is satisfying for adults and kids alike.

### March 28 Meeting

#### Nominating Committee

President Catler asked the Board to approve the Nominating Committee consisting of Elizabeth Handwerker, Hilary Sachs, Len Bachman, Adele Natter and Jeff Davidson. Mark Verschell seconded the motion and it was adopted without objection.

#### Food Committee

The initial focus of the new Food Committee has been getting more commitments for the monthly birthday/anniversary Kiddushim for April through June. A third cake may be needed this month because there are so many names.

#### High Holiday Committee

The High Holy Days Committee recommendations are for an adult service that is family-friendly in the Cherner Auditorium. Features may include:

- A series of shorter conversational pieces rather than one long drash
- Time in the service when parents and children interact.
- A space where it is easier for kids to move around
- An area or areas for kids to play

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## Summary of Board Minutes (continued)

There will continue to be children's programming in other rooms. The service will have ushers, and will need volunteers for service participation, handling pledge cards and other handouts. The committee noted the importance of having infrastructure in place to facilitate the smooth running of the service.

### Jewish Study Center Courses at TI

In May and June, the Jewish Study Center will conduct three courses on Monday evenings at Tifereth Israel:

***Exploring the Kabbalah: Discovering the Spiritual Meaning Jewish Practice and Ritual.*** Four Mondays, May 2, 9, 16 & 23, from 7:00 to 8:15 p.m. Instructor: Jay McKrensjy. Cost: \$55 for TI members.

Learn the essence of Judaism and the path to spiritual meaning in this introductory class to the rich Jewish mystical tradition. Kabbalah seeks answers to the mystery of God, the challenge of dealing with evil, the purpose Jewish rituals and the meaning of Jewish prayer. The course will cover the basic concepts, the symbolism, the lost meaning of Jewish holiday and Shabbat observance, and basic texts.

***Weekday Amidah: A Gateway for Transitions.*** Two Mondays, May 16 & 23, from 7:00 to 8:15 p.m. Instructor: Andrea Foster. Cost: \$25 for TI members.

The Amidah is said in nearly every Jewish prayer service –daily, Shabbat and holidays—but many struggle with its meaning. The class will read this amazing prayer in English and Hebrew and will ponder, meditate, chant, sing and share experiences of a few of the prayer's nineteen themes that affect our daily lives, including families, a higher Power, holiness, repentance, forgiveness, healing and justice..

***Music and Healing.*** Monday, June 6, from 7:00 to 8:15 p.m. Instructor: Andrea Foster. Cost: \$15 for TI members.

Learn contemporary, folk and traditional songs that can help you through times of need and comfort. Learn how to incorporate them into daily prayer or meditation practice. The instructor will bring her guitar and song sheets.

### Religious School Changes

Eitan Gutin announced that we are changing the format of 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grade class and the Chai School.

When the new format is in place, 6<sup>th</sup> grade will meet on Shabbat and Wednesdays and will graduate from Himmelfarb School.

7<sup>th</sup> grade will be in the Chai School program and there will be two tracks: one for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders and one for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders.

We are developing a more formal curriculum for the younger group, with differing content between the two tracks. We are predicting better retention of older kids.

This has come about in the process of trying to solve issues around "what happens during 7<sup>th</sup> grade year" when there are lots of absences during the year when the kids have many B'nai Mitzvah to attend on Saturday mornings.

Also, many of the students have their Bar/Bat Mitzvah early in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, before they complete the 7<sup>th</sup> grade Saturday morning class. The restructuring means that students in the Bar/Bat mitzvah year will be in Chai School and will attend only on Wednesdays.

### **Funeral Practices Committee Always On-Call**

Chaverim of the Funeral Practices Committee are on call to provide counsel and services to synagogue members and their dependents. Prior to contacting the funeral home, please contact one of the following chaverim, Rabbi Seidel, or the TI office (202-882-1605).

**Shelly Heller** h: 301-942-1836  
w: 202-242-6698

**Jeff Davidson** h: 301-593-1335

**David (Judy) Cohen** h: 301-652-2872

**Marcia Goldberg** h: 301-589-0352

## Spring Fling a Great Success

Under the indomitable leadership of **Rona Siskind**, the TI Homecoming/Spring Fling on Sunday, April 3, proved a wonderful evening -- socially, gustatorially, and financially -- for the nearly 200 people who attended,

Some 149 members, 12 former members and 24 children participated. **Roz Kram** outdid herself, producing a delicious menu of Italian, Indian, and Middle Eastern dishes. Approximately \$21,000 was raised from admissions, raffles, and the silent auction, netting, after \$3,500 in expenses, \$17,500—on budget!

### Musical Entertainment

During the lively wine and hors d'oeuvres hour, folks were entertained by two members of the Georgetown String Quartet. During and after dinner the Albert Einstein High School Jazz Ensemble played the "music of our youth," highly danceable swing and pop favorites, to the delight of the crowd, many of whom were on the dance floor.

Rona counts as successes, in addition to raising the money budgeted, the participation of more young families, thanks to some great kids programming — moonbounce, movies, games, and more — and the new feature of raffles, due in large part to **Bernie Shleien's** talent and generosity.

### Many People to Thank

This event could not have happened without the help and support of a lot of people. Rona sends along a long list of well-deserved "thank-you's:"

"First and foremost, a HUGE thanks to **David Zinner, David Mackoff,**

**Sheri Blonder, Steve Ross** and **Tony Craft**, who were incredibly helpful every step of the way; they all worked extremely hard in preparing for and during the event to make things as seamless as possible.

"A special thanks to **Eitan Gutin** (and his crew), for making sure the kids had as good a time as their parents with a Spring Fling of their own.

"And thanks to our wonderful **Roz Kram** (and her crew which included her husband and daughter), we feasted on an amazing assortment of delicious food with enough leftovers that we got to take some home (for a fee that helped us earn even more support for TI!)

"Thanks to **Mark Verschell** and **Jeff Peterman** for a lovely photo montage of TI's past and present. Also, to Mark for offering the Passover wine tasting, and also to Jeff for chronicling yet another TI event (see photos, page 7).

"Thanks to **Debbie Pomerance** who helped in planning and set-up, but most of all was the brains and technology behind getting all the Spring Fling/TI Homecoming and auction information online. And to **Sue Catler** who was the mastermind behind the electronic invitations and many invitation reminders.

"Thanks to **Renee Brachfeld** for her help in auction operations and set-up. And speaking of set-up we had a great team that made the tables sparkle and chairs shine: **Margie Odle, Sylvia Horwitz, Iris Lav, Kathy LaRiviere, Jed** and **Bella Alterman, Carla Ellern** and **Dina Borzekowski**.

"Thanks to **Daniel Turner** for help in reaching out to former TI members, and to event consultants **Franca Brilliant** and **Amy Kritz** for hand-holding and guidance.

"Thanks to **Ted Kram** for tending bar, and to **Jason Kimelman-Block** for coming to Ted's aid when the lines were long and staying for over an hour to help open bottles and pour wine.

"Last but not least to the skilled raffle ticket salespeople -- **Franca Brilliant, Joel, Sam and Eli Cohen and Micah Rubin!** And of course, to **Bernie Shleien**, without whom we wouldn't have had such an exciting and inspiring raffle!

"It does takes a village and I for one, am very thankful to be part of TI's!"

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## Chaverim Bike Ride

**Ray Natter &  
Len Bachman**

Chaverim (formerly the Men's Club) is organizing a Tifereth Israel **Bike-a-Thon, Walk and BBQ** to be held on Lag B'Omer, Sunday, May 22. Save the Date!

Plan on enjoying a wonderful bike ride in the park, with various distances suitable to all levels of biking experience.

For those not inclined to bike, there will a hike in the woods.

For those who prefer other Lag B'Omer fun, there will be a BBQ and appropriate activities at a picnic site.

More details to follow.

# TI Homecoming-Spring Fling, April 3, 2011



David M and David Z Checking Folks In and Out



Meeting and Greeting During Wine and Hors D'oeuvres Hour ...



... to the Music of Flute and Bassoon



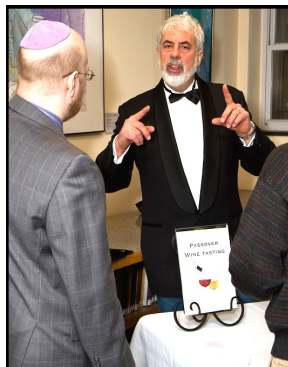
Checking out the Many Silent Auction Options



Delicious International Cuisines — Indian, Italian and Middle Eastern — Prepared by Roz Kram



Rona Siskind, Chair



Mark Verschell, Sommelier



The Albert Einstein High School Jazz Band Played...



...and We Danced

## Social Action at Tifereth Israel

Stephen Nelson

*The following is the second of a series of profiles of TI members active in social action activities. Suggestions are welcome and should be sent to me at [snelson@tmq-dc.com](mailto:snelson@tmq-dc.com).*

Until last fall, TI member **Ethan Merlin** spent eight years as a mathematics teacher at Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School. He was happy there, but last year he made a decision to leave the very stable confines of JDS for a new and much different teaching experience.

In September, Merlin started teaching ninth, eleventh, and twelfth graders at Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter School in the Anacostia section of Southeast Washington. Thurgood Marshall is one of the oldest charter schools in the District, and according to Merlin, has a stable administration and teaching staff. It also boasts some of the best overall test scores among public schools in the city.

### A Culture Shock

Still, it was a major culture shock for Merlin. "At Charles E. Smith, I was teaching students where all the adult figures in their lives really supported education," he says. "And I really had the luxury of spending a lot of time on teaching the content on a deep level."

But at Thurgood Marshall, his teaching style had to change. Because many students weren't getting enough support at home, Merlin found that he "had to spend a lot of time just setting up an environment where the students were prepared to learn." So that meant adopting a number of tactics to attract the students' attention and interest.

Homework assignments became much different than at JDS, where he could assume that most students were keeping up with their studies. He quickly learned that he had to collect homework papers on a regular basis at Thurgood Marshall.

### Motivation But No Role Models

At the same time, he found that many students had a great deal of motivation. "Most have the intention of going to college, but they have few role models, so they find it hard to get from A to B." So he has found some of his most rewarding moments are those where he is mentoring those thinking about school at the next level.

Merlin's experience at Thurgood Marshall has given him a new appreciation of the educational issues faced by the District as well as in other major cities. "In some ways, the problems are intractable because



of the lack of a support structure for many of these students," he says. "The debates about the best method of education are well-meaning on all sides, but no matter what you decide, the most important thing is to make up for disadvantages due to the lack of support."

### Charter Schools Needed

But he's a very strong supporter of the charter school concept. "You often hear people saying that all you're doing is moving the more gifted students into a better environment," an assertion that Merlin challenges. Instead, he says, "charter schools demonstrate that you can improve educational outcomes with disadvantaged students."

Merlin is very happy with the choice he has made. "I believe that I am living out my Jewish values more explicitly in my current setting than before. That is not to say that my years at Charles E. Smith weren't rewarding. I believe that teaching anywhere is holy work. But I feel proud doing this type of public service."

## Annual Meeting of the Congregation, May 23

On April 11, 2011, the Board of Directors voted to hold this year's annual meeting of the Congregation on May 23, 2011, at 7:30 p.m..

At the annual meeting the membership will be asked to vote on the slate of nominees to be Officers, Directors, Cemetery Trustees and

Building Preservation Fund Trustees. They will also vote to set the basic annual dues of the Congregation.

The Nominating Committee, consisting of Jeff Davidson, Len Bachman, Elizabeth Weber Handwerker, Adele Natter and Hilary Sachs, will present a slate of

nominees to the Board for approval at its next meeting, May 9. At that meeting the Board will also finalize its dues recommendation.

As always, members are welcome to attend and observe the Board's meetings.



## Kol Nashim

Paula Flicker



A recent Adult Education Committee report motivated the Kol Nashim board to think about its own programming for next year. While we now have more than enough ideas, we would be delighted to receive additional suggestions. Just contact any board member.

### Nominations for Board

A nominating committee is now in place. The committee chair hopes to have a slate for the next Kol Nashim board within the next few months. Several members of the current board are willing to serve for another 2-year term. However, we believe new board members are

also essential to keep Kol Nashim active and growing. If you are interested in being on the board of Kol Nashim, please contact me.

### June Event

Kol Nashim hopes to schedule a **Transitions Havdalah** for early in June. It will be an evening to get to know each other, reflect and end the Shabbat together.

Each of us will be encouraged to share news of a personal transition, change or event in the last year. Since the event will be at TI there will probably be food involved.

### Mitzvah Knitting

Upcoming dates are **May 2** and **June 6** from 7 to 9 p.m. Join us for knitting, crocheting, or just some good conversation. Attendance has been variable this year. Should we put Mitzvah Knitting on the fall calendar? Should we try another day? Contact **Ellen Zwibak** if you have any thoughts on the future of Mitzvah Knitting. Better yet, come and give us your thoughts in person on a first Monday of the month.

## May/Early June Highlights at Tifereth Israel

May 2 & June 6	Mitzvah Knitting
May 2, 9, 16 & 23	Morning Learning: <i>Parashat HaShavuah</i> , 11 a.m. Job Club, 1 p.m.
May 2, 9, 16 & 23	Jewish Study Center: Exploring the Kabbalah, 7-8:15 p.m.
May 16 & 23	Jewish Study Center: Weekday Amidah, 7-8:15 p.m.
May 21	Iliana Jaime Bat Mitzvah
May 22	Chaverim Lag B'Omer Bike-a-thon, Walk & BBQ
May 23	Annual Meeting of the Congregation, 7:30 p.m.
May 27	Carlebach-Style Kabbalat Shabbat Service and Dinner
June 6	Jewish Study Center: Music and Healing, 7-8:15 p.m.

## Nayes un Mekhayes for TI'ers

Barbara Raimondo

Well, well, what a busy month it's been. Your faithful columnist can barely keep up with all these comings and goings!

### Kids Today

**Dick** and **Margie Siegel's** daughter, **Michele**, was married on April 3 at Battery Gardens in New York City to **Josh Rosenblum**. Michele works in New York as an associate producer for "Studio 360 with Kurt Andersen," a weekly public radio program on pop culture and the arts. Josh, a software engineer, is director of technology at Conductor, a software company in New York. He is studying for a Master's in Jewish Thought at the Jewish Theological Seminary. Michele and Josh live in Brooklyn following their honeymoon in Hawaii.

Also attending the wedding were Michele's two older brothers, **Andy** and **Jonathan**, and their families, and Margie's 96-year-old mother, **Rosalind Greenwald**, of Pompano Beach, Florida. Andy and his wife, **Jennifer Manley**, who live in Studio City, California, have a son, **Grover**, 3. Jonathan and his wife, **Ilana Harlow**, who live in Washington, have two sons, **Boaz**, 5, and **Ziv**, 3.

**Marc Fields**, son of Dr. **Rona Fields**, was noted in *The New York Times* on April 10 in an article on PBS Special Programs scheduled for 2011-12. He is the author-producer of *The Banjo Project*. Marc is Professor of Film and Video at Emerson University in Boston. Dr. Fields' grandson, **Baruch Fields-Babineau**, is a battalion leader in the Golani Brigade of the IDF and, along with his troops, defends the northern border of Israel.

**Rachel Peckham** was accepted into the Communication Arts Program at

Blair High School after having been initially wait listed. She continues to make honor roll grades. Parents are mighty proud.

Other creative TI'ers include **Aylat Lifshitz**, **Gabi Goldring**, and **Mariah Finkelstein**, who are members of Yesodot, a local Israeli folkdance youth troupe. Recently they represented the Washington DC area in the 60<sup>th</sup> Israeli Folkdance Festival in New York, as well as the Israeli Dance Festival DC 2011.

**Jordan Fingerhut** recently completed the Partnership for Jewish Life and Learning's Jewish Youth Philanthropy (JYPI) Program. The JYPI program provides the opportunity for teens to engage in the grant-making process and to become active community leaders, empowered citizens and responsible Jewish adults. Next stop for Jordan? TI Board!

**Jeff** and **Miriam Davidson** are happy to announce the birth of their first grandchild, **Django Micah Davidson (Dov Micah)** to proud parents **Evelyn Funes** and **Ezra Davidson** on March 17th. Jeff and Miriam went up to Brooklyn to get to know their grandson and help with the *Brit Milah*. Next stop for Django? TI Board!

**Marisa Schweber-Koren**, daughter of **Claudine Schweber** and **Ed Koren**, has embarked on additional exciting duties in her work at the Teton County Library: a monthly column in the *Jackson Weekly* newspaper; a monthly book club that meets in a bar; a monthly radio program on local public radio; and a book "house-call" program for those who are home-bound.

And now, to assure she can deal with even more challenges, Marisa is

off to a month of Wilderness and EMT First Responder Training! You wouldn't believe what goes on in libraries in Wyoming!

### Those Nutty Numismatists

**Simcha Kuritzky** spent a long weekend in Sacramento attending the American Numismatic Association's National Money Fair. In addition to attending Shabbat and Purim services at Torat Moshe, Simcha placed four exhibits at the convention, and each won first place in its class. His exhibit on coins engraved with elements from the Ba'al Shem Tov amulet also took third place Best of Show, and his exhibit on stars on coins, notes, and medals took second place Best of Show.

The other two exhibits were on *pidyon ha-ben* coins and tokens, and coins and medals portraying different feline species. He also exhibited the *pidyon ha-ben* tokens at the Whitman Coin Expo in Baltimore, but it was his display on lions on Israel coins, notes, and medals which took second place (there's only one award per exhibitor in Baltimore). Got all that?

**Mike** and **Lisa Kraft** recently returned from a two-week visit to Israel to see their daughter and two young grandchildren in Tel Aviv and do a bit of so-called "work" on the side. Their daughter, **Dina Kraft**, is a journalist who writes for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, *The New York Times* and various other publications. Dina's husband, **Gilad Rosenzweig**, an architect from Toronto, was accepted to the graduate program in urban and transportation planning at M.I.T. The family will be moving to Boston this summer for at least two years. Dina,

(Continued on page 11)

## Nayes un Mekhayes for TI'ers (continued)

meanwhile, just learned that she is a finalist for the prestigious Neiman journalism fellowship program at Harvard.

Lisa, president of the Sabra group of Hadassah, and Mike toured the Hadassah Hospital in Ein Kerem, Jerusalem. They visited the pediatric oncology ward, where they were struck by the number of Arab and ultra-orthodox and secular parents sharing the waiting, common, and ward rooms while their children were undergoing treatment. Lisa also attended the kickoff celebration of Hadassah's centennial year held atop a new Tel Aviv skyscraper built on the former site of an early Hadassah clinic.

Mike, a counter terrorism consultant and writer, also gave a talk to the graduate program at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism in Herzliya and met with colleagues at Tel Aviv University. One side trip was to Ein Hod, the artists' village that was partly damaged by the massive forest fire earlier this year. The blaze stopped miraculously at the edge of the small cemetery where a favorite cousin of Mike's was buried last year.

### The New Boss

Beginning in May, **Jason Kimelman-Block** will be the Director of Leadership Initiatives and Rabbi-in-Residence for the Jewish Funds for Justice and will work out of its DC office. Mazel tov to Jason!

In early April, **Gail Robinson** and **Martin Kessel** went on safari in Tanzania. Martin's nephew from Israel, **Ilan**, is a partner in an Israeli company running tours there. And during the recent successful run of the Theater J play about Rosalind Franklin and the discovery of the structure of DNA, Martin Kessel moderated a post-performance discussion with guest Francis Collins, Director of NIH.

After hiking 1600 miles of the Appalachian Trail last year, in April **Jonathan Kessel** and his dog, Yolo, began hiking the 2,660 mile Pacific Crest Trail from the Mexican border to the Canadian border. When they are finished, Yolo plans to go on safari in Tanzania.

And now for the meaning of last month's word, plumply: "in a wholehearted manner and without

hesitation or circumlocution." (Merriam-Webster Online.) Thanks to all who sent me news, sent me to others who sent me news, or otherwise helped sniff it out. Please send information for next time to [baraimondo@gmail.com](mailto:baraimondo@gmail.com) with "Nayes un Mekhayes" in the heading, or to P.O. Box 466, Washington Grove, MD 20880. This brings to a close a ripsnorter edition of Nayes un Mekhayes for TI'ers.

## Foundation for Jewish Studies Events

### Distinguished Scholar Series

All lectures free, on Tuesdays, from 7:30 to 9 p.m.:

**May 3:** *Jabotinsky: Enduring Insights*, with Douglas Feith, B'nai Israel Congregation, 6301 Montrose Road, Rockville.

**May 10:** *Do We Mean What We Pray, Do We Pray What We Mean?*, with Dr. Eliezer Diamond, Congregation Beth El, 8215 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda.

**May 17:** *Romancing the Stone: America's Embrace of the Ten Commandments*, with Professor Jenna Weissman Joselit, Beth Shalom Congregation, 11835 Seven Locks Road, Potomac

### Lunch & Learn Bible Study

\$45 (\$35 for Foundation members) for 4-session course. Advance registration encouraged. Classes from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m., preceded by bring-your-own brown bag pareve/dairy lunch.

**Tuesdays, May 3, 10, 17, 24:** *Psalms Through the Eyes of Jewish Composers*, with Cantor Sharon Steinberg, JCC of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax.

**Wednesdays, May 4, 11, 18, 25:** *Arguing With God: A Good Jewish Habit*, with Rabbi Jack Luxemburg, JCC of Greater Washington, 6125 Montrose Road, Rockville.

**Tuesdays, May 31; June 7, 14:** *Kabbalah: Uncovering the Mysteries of the Universe*, with Sharone Weizman, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax.

## A Visit to a Lisbon Synagogue

Susan Morse and John List

We and our spouses, Harry Waldman and Lynne List, recently spent two weeks in Portugal, hiking from town to town along the coast in the Alentejo, and searching for traces of Jewish communities destroyed by the Spanish Inquisition.

While in Lisbon, we joined in Shabbat services at Shaare Tikva, Lisbon's only Orthodox synagogue. We both found the experience moving, particularly after having seen the thoroughness with which medieval Jewish communities were expunged.

### A Classic Sephardic Building

The 1904 synagogue is a handsome square structure built in the classic Sephardic style, with the podium for reading the Torah in the center of the main floor. The women sit one level up, behind wooden rails.

Attendance was thin when we arrived (after clearing security) but grew as the service progressed until it reached perhaps 70.

On the day we visited, the congregation was celebrating a bar mitzvah. We both took that as a sign of endurance and optimism in a country where Jews today number, depending on the source, somewhere between 500 and 2,500 in a total population of 10.6 million.

### A Beloved Bar Mitzvah Boy

It was not just any bar mitzvah, but that of a boy who was clearly loved. Of slight build, he carried the Torah with effort, bending under its weight. But strong arms surrounded him, ready to help if he faltered. One man

kept his hand on the boy's head and kipah as he walked. The boy's father and grandfather were nearby.

After the Torah service, the boy spoke briefly, fighting back tears as he recalled his mother, who died within the last few years. The man beside him stroked his arm. Upstairs, his grandmother and sisters and friends wiped their eyes.

### Unfamiliar Tunes and Trope

We could follow the service in Hebrew though none of the tunes – including, to our surprise, the trope for the Haftarah – were familiar.

During the Torah chanting, the Torah gabbai not only checked the reading but signed what we assumed was the trope for the reader.

The Torah scroll was placed on a beautiful ornate silver reading stand on the podium. and was unbound and bound again tightly with a long thin piece of cloth.

The only part of the service in Portuguese was the *D'var Torah*. Susan managed to get the gist on her own: How to account for Jews' prominence in the sciences and mathematics and the arts?

Some, said the speaker, credit the study of Talmud, and the pursuit of one question leading to another question to another question.

### Helpful Woman Neighbor

Riva, a woman seated next to Susan, introduced herself and amplified on the message. Susan had missed the bit about how South Koreans had reputedly taken note of

the connection and now wanted to study Talmud, too. (!!!)

Riva, who had known the bar mitzvah boy's mother, identified members of the boy's family and explained how, after the woman's death, one couple in the synagogue in particular had helped the boy, acting like an aunt and uncle to him. They were there that day.

Riva said the congregation was small -- about 300 members. There were regular Shabbat services, she said, as well as religious classes.

She also expressed her gratitude to America, and said every Jew owed the nation a debt.

### Lasting Impressions

What were our lasting impressions of the service?

Susan:

"Two things that made the service especially meaningful to me (aside from the pride they took in it...and how welcoming they were) were the number of young people and young families there and the evident warmth they expressed toward each other and the bar mitzvah boy in particular."

John:

"There was a wonderful Kiddush in the courtyard following the service. At the Kiddush, we met the young American Chabbaad rabbi and his wife who moved to Lisbon four months ago to establish Jewish outreach activities. He and a more senior Chabbaad rabbi seemed to have major roles as floor and Torah gabbaim."

## Bat Mitzvah

Hi, my name is **Iliana Jaime** and I am 12 years old. My bat mitzvah is May 21, and my *parashah* is *Bechukotai*. I am in seventh grade and go to the Washington International School, where I am already fluent in Spanish and currently learning Chinese.

I enjoy acting, singing, and dancing. I was just in my school's musical, *Peter Pan*, where I was a lost boy. I also recently went skiing for the first time in Pennsylvania. I loved it!

This past summer, I went to Habonim Dror Camp Moshava, along with many of my friends from TI. I enjoyed it a lot and can't wait to be back next year!

I hope to see you at my batmitzvah.



## Upcoming Friday Night Minyan Assignments

### May 6

Claude Fontheim & Orit Frenkel  
Brenda & Lee Footer  
Ira Forman & Caryn Pass  
Henry Fox & Sarah Kagan  
David Freed  
Bruce Friedland & Jenny Bryant  
Ben Finkelstein & Laurie Hollander  
Naomi Friedman  
Joshua Furman & Melanie Bostwick  
Judy Galat

### May 13

William & Miriam Galston  
Stephen Garber & Lynne Snyder  
Jared Garelick & Ellen Kramarow  
Seth Glabman & Martha Hare  
Rick Glaser & Sheryl Gross-Glaser

Howard Gleckman & Ann Kline  
Mimi Godfrey  
John & Marcia Goggin  
Marcia Goldberg  
Joseph & Dody Goldberg

### May 20

Eliot Goldberg & Traci Kammer Goldberg  
Joshua & Sara Goldberg  
Myrna Goldman  
Paul Goldman & Debbie Pomerance  
Tom & Lisa Goldring  
David Goldstein  
George & Marjorie Greenberg  
Larry & Melanie Greenfield  
Abraham & Dena Greenstein  
Seth Grimes & Franca Brilliant

### June 3

Richard Gryziak & Sandi Verbois

Stefan Gunther & Lisa Goldberg  
Jonathan Halpern  
Daniel & Elizabeth Handwerker  
Elliot Harrison & Wendy Coleman  
David Hart & Lois Frankel  
Matt & Linda Heller  
Bruce Heppen & Bonnie Suchman  
Mitchell & Patti Herman  
Carolivia Herron

### June 10

James & Annie Hershberg  
Judith Herzog  
Seth Himelhoch & Sheila Jelen  
William & Nira Hodos  
Lauren & Ari Holtzblatt  
Robert & Helen Hovis  
Anita Isicson  
Verne & Abby Jacobs  
William & Marissa Jacobson

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Pinson's new  
grandchild

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