



The Menorah

Notes from the Rabbi: Ethan Seidel Revivifying Friday Night Services



Why can't we get as much *ru'ah* going on Friday night as we do on Shabbat morning? How come we typically get 150 adults on a Shabbat morning, but only 15 on Friday night? Or maybe I'm being greedy – maybe I should be happy with what we have!

And yet, for those of us who live closer and don't have to worry about dinner being too late for little ones, what's holding us back?

After all, there are some who say, quite rightly, that it's an unusual community that has vibrant Friday night *and* Shabbat morning services. And yet, I can't help but think, aren't we an unusual community? Now it is true, with all of us spread out geographically (and many of us with young children), the Friday night service (when you include the time to get to TI and back) impinges on the more important Friday night dinner.

Surely not the service itself – just an hour long, and filled with lovely melodies and (for many of us) lovely memories. And because the Friday night service is set snugly in our chapel, there's a more *heimish* feel than on Shabbat morning services, in our large, imposing, even daunting sanctuary.

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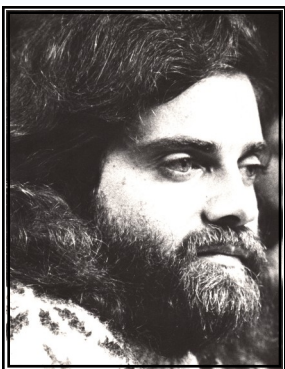
President's Column: Joel Cohen Wrong Questions Wrong Answers

As I thought about all the possible questions that could be considered this month, I decided that anything I could say about the Israeli elections would please half the congregation and upset the other half, and anything I could say about the President's Inauguration would please half and upset half.

Democrats and Republicans equally and please no one!

Nothing that the American government does speaks more to Jewish values than its support of the programs that help those who need help, and the greatest danger to these programs is the discussion of the federal deficit. The danger is not the deficit but the discussion.

One of the great looming political questions of our time concerns the budget deficit and the national debt. A small number of insincere politicians have pushed this to the forefront of American public thought.



So I thought that a discussion of the deficit would be quite appropriate for this column. Especially because I am likely to upset

Now, not everyone who worries loudly about the debt is insincere, but the ones

(Continued on page 3)



Notes from the Rabbi (continued)

Perhaps, as a congregant suggested to me this week, part of the problem could be the lack of opportunities to participate on Friday night. On Shabbat morning, there are plenty of chances to participate:

Four service leaders (*Pesukei D'Zimrah*, *Shacharit*, Torah Service, and *Musaf*), the deliverer of the *drash*, seven *aliyot* to read (which could be done by as many as seven different readers), seven different people to be called up to the Torah, the Haftarah reader, the Torah *gabbai'im*, the floor *gabbai*, not to mention ark openers, Torah carriers, the lifter and tier of the Torah, the greeter, the security people... you get my point.

Even if you're only sitting in a seat and singing, you get the feeling on Shabbat morning that the community as a

whole has put on this service. You feel part of something larger than yourself, which is a big part of what *davening* is all about.

Contrast this with what happens on a typical Friday night. Usually, I lead the entire service, *and* I give the short *drash*. Given such a Rabbi-centric service, should I be surprised that the community has not really taken ownership? Should I wonder that without sending 10 folks emails each week, we would not even make our minyan?

Would you help me make Friday night services more participatory? Even in this short service, there are four different pieces that the service could be broken into, of different levels of difficulty, ranging from challenging to easy. In other words, there is something for everybody who would like to participate.

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1. Kabbalat Shabbat. This is the first part of the service, filled with many and varied songs. It takes some skill to lead this part, true, but I know for a fact that many of you have the ability – either to lead this already, or to learn how to lead. And I'd be delighted to teach you!

2. The Drash. This is only two to four minutes long, the perfect length for someone who is a little shy about giving a *drash*. And it's a much smaller crowd (for now, anyway!). I also have encouraged bar mitzvah kids to give a little *drash* at this time. Again, I'd love to help you with this.

3. Ma'ariv. This is the second part of the *davening*. This is more cut and dried, tune-wise, than *Kabbalat Shabbat*, but there is still plenty of room for singing.

4. Kiddush. This is just one page. You know this! (and if you don't, I'll send you an mp3 file of it). You could lead this! Even a child could lead this! Wouldn't it be nice if a different person did this every Shabbat?

Our Shabbat morning service has thrived, partly (perhaps even largely) because of its participatory nature. Could this be the ticket for a resurgence on Friday nights?

If I call you about leading, please think about saying "yes"! Better yet, call me, and tell me how you'd like to participate!

Rabbi Seidel

President's Column (continued)

who have forced it to be front and center of any policy discussion are.

This is a group of people – at the moment led by Grover Norquist, but over many decades led by others — whose main aim is to strangle government programs; they don't really care about the deficit. The most awful moments for them occurred near the end of President Clinton's second term when it appeared that there was going to be a surplus.

Deficits Used to Cut Programs

Despite what they may say, "budget surplus" is the specter that haunts their dreams: As long as there is a deficit, they can fight to cut social programs, especially "entitlement programs" (a phrase invented to conjure up long lines of lazy people with their hands out and yelling that they are entitled). But with a surplus, they knew that cutting programs would be much more difficult.

The surplus quickly became an election issue in 2000. One candidate, Al Gore, proposed that the money be used to strengthen Social Security and Medicare, finance a Medicare prescription drug program, put money into education and quality health care, and save a chunk of money in case the economic predictions were wrong.

The Biggest Tax Cut in History

The stranglers would have none of that and got the other candidate, George W. Bush, to propose the biggest tax cut in history. In the end, as we know, the economy turned bad, there was no surplus, Bush cut taxes, put in a Medicare prescription drug plan, and held two wars, leaving the tax cuts in place.

This led to an increase in the deficit, but the stranglers all said that deficits were not a serious problem. They

weren't happy about the prescription drug program, but began using the deficit as a way to cut down on social spending.

By the time President Bush was finishing up, the worst recession since the 1930's had hit and the stranglers wanted all government money to go into further tax cuts. They waved the deficit flag from the beginning of President Obama's tenure at every move the President made, arguing that everything he did (including brushing his teeth in the morning) added to the deficit, and the deficit was unquestionably evil.

To be sure there are many honest deficit hawks. Some worked to reduce what they saw as wasteful government spending, while supporting the expansion of other programs, always with an eye on the deficit.

Deficits With High Unemployment

Until recently, I was fairly quiet about my feeling that deficits are unimportant until the economy has fully recovered and unemployment has gone down to 5%. I relied on two economists for whom I have a great deal of respect, as they have been right time after time. They are Dean Baker and Jamie Galbraith. (Full disclosure: both of them are friends and were on the National Board of Americans for Democratic Action while I was Chair.)

So I thought of the deficit non-worriers as a small group of important – but not mainstream – economists. And I did not argue the issue publicly. But this past Sunday, Ezra Klein had an article on the front page of the Washington Post's Business section saying the same thing. That means it will be seen (if not thoroughly digested) by nearly a million readers, including most of financial Washington. That is as mainstream as it gets.

If Deficit Matters, Raise Taxes

Klein is pretty blunt about it: "In general, if someone says he thinks the deficit is the most important issue facing the country, but he doesn't think it is important enough to merit raising another dollar in taxes, he probably doesn't think the deficit is all that important an issue."

There are some who even go further. There is a case to be made that the *higher* the ratio of debt to gross domestic product, the better off the economy is, at least in the short run. That is, the economy as a whole, but not the banking industry, because the higher the ratio, the lower interest rates. This is good for the economy as a whole, but not great for Wall Street bankers. So if you are going to worry about the economy, worrying about how to increase employment is more productive than worrying about the deficit.

Snider's Receipts

Do you shop at Snider's? If so, please deposit your receipts in the envelope on the bulletin board outside the TI office.

Snider's will give 1% of the amount purchased on receipts we collect to our neighborhood school, Shepherd Elementary.

The receipts are due at the end of February, so find those 2012 receipts (and 2013, too) and turn them in today.

Please do not cut off the date—all the receipts must be from the current year and we can't use receipts without dates.

New Members

Jared Garelick

Barbara Abrams

Barbara, a Cleveland native, after living many years in Tallahassee, Florida, recently moved here for one of the usual reasons: a federal government position. She is currently a Commissioner's Fellow at the FDA, which is a two-year appointment. Her research as a fellow focuses on "personalized medicine," a field that promises soon to provide medicines tailored to individual patient characteristics.

Barbara was a pediatrician with a clinical practice for many years before going back to school for a law degree. She then worked for the State of Florida for six years before deciding to apply her skills at the federal level. On the side, Barbara has taught Hebrew school in the past, and has more than 20 years' experience as a B'nei Mitzvah tutor (take note, parents of tweens).

She already enjoys participating in many activities at TI, including Rabbi Seidel's Talmud class. Barbara did not do any shul-shopping after arriving in Washington. She had been friends with Mark Verschell and Elizabeth Leff when they lived in Tallahassee, and they told her TI was the place for her. That makes Mark and Elizabeth our Magnet Members of the month.

Brad and Liana Brooks-Rubin

Brad and Liana have lived in the Washington area for many years, but only recently found their way to TI. Brad, originally from the Philadelphia area, works for the State Department as the Special Advisor for Conflict Diamonds.

He represents the US in international efforts to stop the trade in diamonds used to finance violent militias in central Africa. A lawyer, Brad previously worked at the Treasury Department on sanctions enforcement.

Liana, who grew up in Boston and Tucson, also worked at the State Department until a few years ago. Her specialty was Mideast refugee issues. In a change, Barbara left State to become a yoga teacher, and then, two years ago, began work on a degree in acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine at the Tai Sophia Institute in Laurel. She is about to begin the clinical training part of her program on real patients. TI members interested in trying acupuncture at a supervised clinic for a reduced rate should give her a call. During her recent winter break, Liana combined her skills, spending a few weeks in Amman, Jordan, giving yoga and relaxation courses to Iraqi and Syrian refugees.

Brad and Liana are the parents of two boys, Eliav and Adiv, who are both students at the Jewish Primary Day School as well as avid athletes.

Welcome to this month's featured new members!

New Member Special

Do you know someone who might be interested in a great congregation to join? Tell them about Tifereth Israel's Winter/Spring Membership Package.

The package includes half-price dues for the first year, one-time free High Holiday tickets, and two Shabbat dinners at the shul for the entire family.

Give their contact information to Alice Burton at TIMembership@Tifereth-Israel.org.

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. In the event of a death, 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

Summary of TI Board of Directors Meeting December 10, 2012

Attending: Renee Brachfeld, Sharon Brown, Alice Burton, Susan Catler, Joel Cohen, Jeff Davidson, Joe Davidson, Deena Dugan, Varda Fink, Esther Herman, Joanne Hovis, Paula Martin, Rabbi Sarah Meytin, Cynthia Peterman, Debbie Pomerance, Andrew Reamer, Vivian Seidner, Jevera Temsky, Daniel Turner, Mark Verschell, Chris Zeilinger.

Excused: Jeffrey Colman, Stephanie Roodman Murdock, Margie Odle, David Levy.

Staff: Eitan Gutin, Rabbi Ethan Seidel, and David Zinner.

President's Report, Joel Cohen: There will be four *ex officio* members of the Rabbinic Sabbatical Committee – the President, the Administrative Vice President, the Ritual Vice President and one member of the Rabbinic Consultative Committee.

Membership Committee, Alice Burton: One new household has joined since the last meeting – Violeta Fiorino-Schwartz and her two children, Natan and Yael. The donut baking with Rabbi Seidel and new members went well. Many new members attended.

Photography Exhibit, Alice Burton: The Photography Show will hang for three months. Over 100 photos from 57 different people were submitted for consideration.

Ritual Committee, Jevera Temsky: We finished our review

of last year's High Holidays and will begin discussion of next fall's holidays in January.

Retreat, Eitan Gutin and Cynthia Peterman: 101 people attended this year's retreat and we have volunteers to plan the retreat for next year. For the second year in a row the retreat will at least break even, in part because of an anonymous gift.

Cynthia Peterman and Judi Berland did a great job of putting together the adult program. We worked hard on updating the kids' programming, integrating the B'nei Mitzvah kids into the program.

We have the information we need on Capital Camps to consider going there. The cost there for next year would be about the same as Pearlstone this year. The retreat photos (by Jeff Peterman and Mark Verschell) are on p-base.

Lifelong Learning Committee, Eitan Gutin and Cynthia Peterman: 196 people signed up for the Hanukkah celebration. Planning was done by Brenda Footer, Jennifer Kefer, Tanya Alteras and Jeannie Ireland.

There is a new committee acting like a school board, and working on a strategic plan for K – 10th grades. Our USY'ers ran a Trivia night that raised \$200-\$250 for *tzedakah*. The teenagers like to come when they are running a youth group program. This and dinner in the spring will be our flagship programs. The Chai School kids who graduated last

year are meeting monthly, organized on their own.

Social Action: Deena Dugan plugged the Xmas dinner. This year we will serve dinner to about 400 people at four locations.

Executive Director's Report, David Zinner: David announced that two hundred people were here for the 4th District police dinner. They had a great time and loved the food. David Zinner and David Mackoff spent time selling the use of the building for other events to the guests at the police dinner.

TI has made the second round of consideration for rental of the building for an Orthodox girls' education program for next year. They are homeschooled now so it is not clear whether it will be a school or a gathering place for homeschoolers.

New Business: Policies related to the supervision of children will be discussed and reviewed. There will be a full discussion when a proposal is received.

Caregivers Group

Are you helping to care for an elderly or sick friend or relative? Would you like to chat with others in similar circumstances?

Join Rabbi Seidel's support group for caregivers, Sunday, February 17, at 10:15 a.m.

Lilmod U'lilamed: Eitan Gutin Teaching The Wall (Part 2)

This article is the second in a series exploring why the North American Jewish establishment has responded relatively weakly to the increasingly restrictive rules for women who wish to pray at the Kotel (Western Wall). Through this series of articles I will explore how the Kotel is taught as part of Israel education and whether our educational practices have contributed to such a weak public response. Ultimately, I ask whether we need to reassess the place of the Kotel in Jewish education.

The history of the *Kotel* is simple; the meaning of the *Kotel* is anything but.

A story is told that Rabban Gamliel, Rabbi Elazar Ben Azaria, Rabbi Yehoshua, and Rabbi Akiva went to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem to mourn the destruction that was still fresh in all of their minds. While most of the Temple's stones not destroyed in the fire had been re-used for other structures some stones and pillars remained from the great house of God that used to stand at the summit of Mt. Moriah.

Why Rabbi Akiva Laughed

The four men witnessed a fox emerging from where the Holy of Holies -- the *Kodesh HaKadashim* -- used to be housed. As Gamliel, Elazar, and Yehoshua began to wail and moan in mourning Akiva began to smile and laugh.

The three asked Akiva, "Why are you laughing?"

Akiva responded, "Why are you wailing and moaning?"

They responded, "This place was once so holy that it could consume a stranger who approached without permission, and now even a fox can

run through it. Why shouldn't we cry?!"

Akiva answered them, "Because of the prophecies of Zechariah and Uriah. Uriah first said that Jerusalem would be plowed over, like a field where foxes and other animals run. But Zechariah's vision was that old men and women would yet sit in the streets of Jerusalem. I laugh because now that the first prophecy has come to pass the second cannot fail to be true!" The three others were thusly consoled.

A Place to be Mourned or Celebrated?

The great challenge of the Temple Mount has always been whether it is a place to be mourned or celebrated. From the destruction of the Second Temple (really Herod's Temple) in 70 CE until June 1967, it was a place of mourning and lamentations. For nearly 2000 years, whenever the local authorities allowed it, Jews gathered -- first on the Temple Mount, then later along its western retaining wall -- to mourn what was lost with Jerusalem's destruction at the hands of Titus.

Titus did not leave much of Jerusalem besides the Temple Mount. Josephus tells of how the Roman legions did their best to dig up even the city's walls, and that when they were done it was difficult to tell that a thriving city had once surrounded the Temple.

A Focus of Rituals

The Temple Mount and its immediately surrounding area became the focus of our rituals mourning the loss of the Temple and Jewish sovereignty over the land itself. When subsequent rulers

restricted Jewish access to the Temple site, the Western retaining wall -- the closest wall to the Temple -- became our place of prayer.

The name "Wailing Wall" is not an accident; even Mark Twain, upon visiting Jerusalem, was able to hear the wailing of the Jews below from the Dome of the Rock above.

The phrase recited annually at the Seder and after Yom Kippur, "Next Year In Jerusalem," was first conceived as a messianic hope that God would bring us back and rebuild his Temple where the previous two stood.

Over those two thousand years there were many failed attempts to buy the land next to the *Kotel* for Jewish use. Throughout that time, whenever the local rulers permitted it, the wall was one of the centers of worship for the Jewish population in Jerusalem.

Zionists Reject Wall's Symbolism

To early Zionists, Jerusalem Jews were an anachronism and symbol of what they were trying to leave behind as they crafted a new Jewish ideal. However, leaders such as Chaim Weizmann recognized how important a symbol Jerusalem would be in rallying world Jewry around the nationalistic aspirations of the Zionist movement.

They knew that a capital in Jerusalem would have more meaning and symbolic power than a capital anywhere else. In 1967, with the reunification of Jerusalem, that national aspiration was near to realization than ever before and the *Kotel*, for the first time in nearly 2000 years, was completely under Jewish control.

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Teaching The Wall (continued)

All of the above is history -- what happened **to** the *Kotel*. I am much more fascinated by the spiritual experience of standing at the Wall.

Stories of the mystics and later the Hassidim focus on the *Kotel* as a place where God's presence can be revealed, where fate can be changed and where prayer is stronger than anywhere else on Earth.

Some write notes and place them in the *Kotel* because it helps them with personal focus, but most write those notes with the belief that God pays closer attention to the *Kotel* than to any other place.

The Shekhinah in Jerusalem

I think there is some truth to the spiritual tradition surrounding Jerusalem.

The *Shekhinah*, God's presence, surrounds us at all times here on Earth and, presumably, across the known universe. However, there are filters and barriers between humans and God. We cannot always feel the *Shekhinah* unless we are in the proper state of mind.

Feeling God's Presence

Sometimes that state of mind comes during Jewish ritual -- prayer, fasting, celebrations such as weddings and B'nei Mitzvah. Sometimes it comes during other overwhelming experiences in life.

In my own life I have touched the *Shekhinah* in prayer but also at large events such as concerts and rallies.

The *Tanakh* makes very clear that once the Ark arrived in Jerusalem

God's presence took up residence on Mt. Moriah. How can God reside anywhere if God is everywhere? The answer to me is that in Jerusalem and, especially in the area surrounding the Temple Mount, it is easier to access the *Shekhinah* than any other place on Earth.

Easy Access Leads to Kavanah

God does not hear a prayer more clearly in Jerusalem than here in DC, but the easy access there to the *Shekhinah* makes *Kavanah* (intent) easier to come by in Jerusalem, standing at the wall. At least, for me, it used to work that way.

That was before I started to realize how an ancient pile of stones has become, to some, more important than the people who strive to pray near them...

Lifelong Learning

Eitan Gutin

TI Families

Our second annual **Family Mitzvah Day**, in honor of Dr. King, was a wonderful event.

TI children and parents made 35 canisters of dry soup mix for the Capital Area Food Bank, four comfy security blankets for Project Linus, and decorated boxes, *challah* covers, and get-well-soon cards that will eventually become full Shabbat-in-a-Box packages for TI members who are hospitalized over Shabbat.

Our next big family celebration will be **Purim!** The festivities begin on Saturday night, February 23, with the reading of the *Megillah* and the booging of Haman.

For the reading our USY chapter will be renting boxes of pasta and rice to the congregation to use as noise-makers. All proceeds go to the Tikun Olam Tzedakah Fund and all the food will go to a local food bank.

Our annual **Purim Carnival** opens its doors at noon on Sunday, February 24. Check your email for information.

Himmelfarb & Chai Happenings

Registration will begin in March for the 2013-2014 school year in the Himmelfarb and Chai schools. Parents interested in either school program are welcome to visit our classes at just about any time. Talk with Eitan Gutin, Director of Lifelong Learning, to arrange a visit.

Havdalah Potluck, February 9

There will be a Havdalah potluck on February 9, at 5:45 p.m., at the home of Debbie Pomerance and Paul Goldman, 1230 Woodside Parkway in Silver Spring.

This is a wonderful way to participate with the TI family and enjoy the warmth of this weekly end to Shabbat. Please call Debbie at 301-585-7040 if you plan to come and tell her what you could bring.

Also, save the date of March 2 for the final Havdalah potluck of the winter, at the home of Alice and Joel Burton in Chevy Chase.

Adult Education

Cynthia Peterman

I hope you were able to join us for two events in January in commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Loretta Saks spoke about the history of Italian Jewry and particularly the story of her parents' childhoods in Italy and experience under the Italian racial laws of the 1930s.

Then we welcomed a troupe of Italian and local Washington area actors for a reading of Tonino Tosto's play *Inventing the Enemy: 1938*, which further dramatized the difficult years for Italian Jews in the late 1930s.

On April 7 the Jewish world will commemorate the Holocaust with the annual observance of *Yom HaShoah*. If you are interested in helping to design a commemoration at TI, please contact Cynthia Peterman at cynp25@gmail.com.

SHALEM

On **February 2**, **Carolivia Herron** and **Chris Griffin** will discuss James Joyce's Jewish character, Leopold Bloom. This will be an unusual SHALEM program, since it will be **interactive!**

After Chris and Carolivia give introductions to the text, participants will use handouts and copies of the book to choose one of the 18 chapters and share short reflections about a theme. Then we will celebrate Joyce's birthday (February 2, 1882) with Kosher Irish Beer (for those 21 and over)!

Classes

Back by popular demand, **Gideon Amir** will once again teach a class

for TI. Gideon's class, *A Modern View of Biblical Women*, offers a different approach to reading Biblical texts about women.

Traditional reading of the Bible sees women in a minority, submissive role. Tradition also "blames" women for the "sin" of Eve, when she allowed herself to be tempted by the serpent and eat from the forbidden fruit, a sin that traditionally brought death and suffering upon humanity.

However, modern scholarship reads the same Biblical texts in a different way, and has a different view of the role and importance of women. The class will run for four sessions on Thursday evenings, February 7-28 from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Check the TI website for registration information: <http://tifereth-israel.org/modern-view-biblical-women>.

TI's own **Michele Sumka** and **Susan Dreiband** will offer a 12-week course on *Spiritual Eldering through Conscious Aging* beginning on February 12, at 10:30 a.m.. How we view the aging process and how we process our life experiences can enhance our fulfillment by making us aware of the preciousness of every moment.

Michele and Susan will build the discussions around the teachings of modern Jewish thinkers and will draw on their own personal life experiences. Participants will share stories, discuss topics that will enable growth and contemplation, and do journaling.

The class will read and discuss Rabbi Zalman Shachter-Shalomi's book, *From Age-ing to Sage-ing: A Profound New Vision of Growing Older*. See the TI website for

registration information: <http://tifereth-israel.org/spiritual-eldering-through-conscious-aging>.

Trips

Join us at the Library of Congress on the Monday of Presidents' Weekend, February 18, to tour the exhibit, *Words Like Sapphires: 100 Years of Hebraica at the Library of Congress, 1912-2012*.

The exhibit offers many unique items such as a Karaite *humash* in Judeo-Tatar, a prayer book from the Paris Sanhedrin, prayers for Shabbatei Zvi, and, of course, the famous Washington Haggadah. *Words Like Sapphires* is part of the Library's multiyear "Celebration of the Book," which explores the ways books influence lives.

We'll meet at TI at 9:30 a.m. for breakfast and a brief overview of the exhibit, prepared with advance research by Cynthia Peterman and Jessica Weissman. Then we'll travel together by Metro to the Library to view the exhibit.

You can also meet us at the exhibit at approximately 11:15 a.m. For further information, please contact Cynthia at cynp25@gmail.com, or Jessica at jweissmn@his.com.

The Winter/Spring Adult Education Course Catalog is now available!

Get your copy at TI or online at <http://tifereth-israel.org/sites/default/files/spiritweb/AECatalog.Winter-Spring.2013.pdf>.

If you have suggestions for upcoming courses or programs, please get in touch with Cynthia Peterman (cynp25@gmail.com).

Social Action at TI: Stephen Nelson Thank You to Our Xmas Lunch Volunteers

More than 130 volunteers from Tifereth Israel and Adat Shalom joined together Christmas Day to provide meals to more than 300 homeless people in Washington, D.C. We at the TI Social Action Committee would like to recognize and thank our project leaders, Martin Kessel and Gene Herman (and Adat Shalom's Lisa Hack and Steve Harvey), along with the rest of the volunteers (including numerous children and teenagers).

Excerpted below is a thank you letter to the volunteers:

"A VERY BIG thank you to the volunteers who took part in the 2012 Xmas Luncheon project. Both the ladies and men we served were most appreciative of the home-style cooking and really loved the food.

"The addition of a fourth shelter this year, the Open Door Women's Shelter, proves that we have the resources to successfully undertake this major project. Overall supervision of the food procurement and all the items required for serving the meals was ably done by Roz Kram. Our cooks at TI were led by Georgia Herron, Varda Fink and Roz Kram.

"The 18 extra-large frozen turkeys, were deep fried by Ed Davis. The Mac & Cheese was cooked by Deena and Pierre Dugan, Janet Nesse, Elliot Rosen and Sharon Cohen. The Cabbage was cooked by Janey and Ricky Harris. The pies for the four shelters were supplied by Adat Shalom. All of the food was delivered by Aron and Karen Primack, Julie and Oren Steinberg, Ellen Nissenbaum, Jeff Colman, and Andre Harris.

"The Captains of the four shelters served this year were: Franca

Brilliant, Seth Grimes, David and Judy Cohen at the John Young Center; Frank Solomon at the Open Door Shelter; Gail Robinson and Anastasia Robinson at the Tubman Center; and Lisa Hack and Steve Harvey at the Adam's Place Men's Shelter. All did an excellent job of setting up the meals, organizing the serving and cleanup. Our children at each of the shelters did a wonderful job in wrapping the presents for our luncheon guests as well as helping in serving the food.

"Thanks to Jeri Roth Lande for organizing the collection of hats, gloves and scarves which were handed out as presents. The TI Knitting Circle provided an impressive number of hand-made woolen scarves – thanks to Andrea Kline for coordinating this. A special donation of both men's and women's hats, gloves and scarves was made by Rachel Firschein. Always ready to help were TI staff members Sheri Blonder and Steve Ross.

"We can be proud that both our congregations, Tifereth Israel and Adat Shalom, were able to bring some Christmas cheer to over 300 homeless citizens of Washington DC. Our call for sponsorships of Turkeys and Meals for the Xmas Luncheon was highly successful bringing in close to \$2,000! Pictures from the Xmas Luncheon Project by Jeff Peterman, Gene Herman, Martin Kessel, Aaron Solomon, Ann Cohen and Carl Bergman can be found on [page 10]. Our very best wishes and thank you again!"

Other Volunteers Included:

John Young Center: Benjy Cohen, Elah Cohen-Rimmer, James Ehrman, Sylvana Ehrman, Deb Gilman, Eliana Gilman, Ezra Grimes,



Stefan Gunther, Lisa Goldberg, Sophia Gunther, Rose Halper, Ed Halper, Seth Halper, Jennifer Kefer, Doron Kefer, Ari Kefer, Andrea Kline, Sarah Meytin, Coby Meytin, Ruthie Meytin, Jane Rimmer and Brad Rubin.

Tubman Center: Elaine Akst, Jocelyn Akst, Elliot Akst, Ann Gilbert, Judi Berland, Gabriel Frank, Arnit Frank, Briana Jacobs, Karen Karlin, Iris Lav, Mike Lav, Kim Levone, Wylie Levone, Raviv Levone, Liat Levone, Boaz Levone, David Rabin, Dossie Rabin, Robert Lubran, Carol Blumberg, Barbara Schaffer, Hezi Schaffer.

Open Door: Chelsea Benjamin, Jane Berman, Adam Diamond, Mira Diamond-Berman, Galya Diamond-Berman, Raphael Diamond-Berman, David E. Cohen, Debbie Ehrenstein, David Levy, Margi Helsel-Arnold, Laura Rappaport, David Silber, Aaron Solomon, Isaac Solomon, and Wendy Susswein.

Adam's Place: Ann Cohen, Varda Fink, Lauren Gross, Bruce Heppen, Bonnie Suchman, Shir Naveh, Larry Paul, Shelley Rudick, Carol Stern, Raine Weiner.

Cooking: Carolivia Herron, Ivy Baer, Wilma Brier, James Ehrman, Sylvana Ehrman, Sheryl Gross-Glaser, Andrea Kline, Gail Phillips, Jackelyn Lopez, and Lisa Traiger.

Turkey Carving: Rebecca Coleman, Ray Coleman, Stan Grabia, Rose and Ed Halper, Marjorie Odle, Larry Paul, and Arnie Revzin.

Cooking & Serving Lunch to the Homeless, December 25, 2012



Kol Nashim

Paula Flicker



Come to TI for **Games Night** on Saturday, **February 2**, at 7:30 p.m. It will be a fun evening of games and snacks. Bring a game or play one from the TI collection.

Francie Kranzberg will be looking for Mah Jongg players. **Rabbi Siedel** is challenging others in anagrams. Bridge games and scrabble games are likely as well.

The Kol Nashim **Book Club** continues. The next book is *The Autobiography of God: A Novel* by Julius Lester. The discussion will be held **February 19**, at 7:30 p.m., at the home of **Esther** and **Gene**

Herman. Everyone is invited to participate.

We are delighted that Dr. **Maxine Grossman** will be giving a post-Purim talk on Sunday, March 3, at 10:15 a.m. Her topic is *The Mask of Esther and the Face behind It*.

It wasn't a Kol Nashim idea, but we're excited to help spread the word about a new **TI Cookbook!** **Melissa Perrera** is behind this project.

If we can reach a goal of collecting recipes from at least 50 TI'ers, the cookbook will be compiled and sold at the Spring Fling this year. Any

type of recipe is welcome, as long as it is a favorite you have served or eaten yourself. If you are basing a recipe on a published source, please note the source.

To give Melissa time for formatting, editing and printing the cookbook in time to sell at the Spring Fling silent auction in early May, the deadline for recipes is **April 5**. Please send recipes to Melissa at: perera_melly@yahoo.com.

Our Caring Community

Susan Catler

Tifereth Israel's Caring Community facilitates congregants helping fellow congregants at times of need.

We bring meals to families with new babies, households with ill family members, those sitting shiva, and people in the throes of moving. To make it easier to visit and bring a meal, we have been cooking about once a month in the TI kitchen, preparing and freezing main courses so volunteers can deliver meals when the need arises.

We also provide rides, especially to services, events at TI and doctor's appointments. We let people know when congregants would like visits or calls. We pitch in, taking out the trash, picking up groceries or medicines.

We have recently begun providing Shabbat Boxes to members who are in a hospital or rehab facility over Shabbat. The boxes contain battery-

operated candles (flames are not allowed in these facilities), a Kiddush cup, grape juice, and *challah*. The boxes themselves were decorated at the Drop-In Mitzvah Day program over the Martin Luther King Jr. weekend.

To make this work, we need to know when our assistance would be welcomed. For example, we cannot arrange for someone to bring a Shabbat Box if we don't know there is a congregant in a hospital or rehab facility.

If you, someone in your family, or someone you know in the congregation, would like some help we can provide, please let either Rabbi Seidel or Susan Catler know. You can reach Susan at TIHelp@Tifereth-Israel.com or call her at (202) 277-0119.

If you would like to learn about requests for assistance and

volunteer, you can sign up for the computer service we use, Lotsa Helping Hands. We use it to schedule help and alert people when help is needed. We send e-mails when new opportunities to volunteer are posted.

You can check the website's calendar for unmet needs at any time. Each time you volunteer, you make a one-time commitment. To join the more than 150 TI members on TI's Lotsa Helping Hands, sign up at: www.lotsahelpinghands.com/c/642923.

If you would like to support our efforts in other ways, you can contribute to TI's Helping Hands Fund. This fund is used to support the Caring Community program by purchasing needed supplies.

You can contribute on-line by going to <http://tinyurl.com/TIDonations>.

Nayes un Mekhayes for TI'ers

Barbara Raimondo

Beltin' It Out

Marjorie ("my friends call me 'Beyoncé'") **Rosenthal** sings in the Senior JCC Chorus, known as the "Treble Makers." On January 6, they celebrated the 100th anniversary of the JCC movement with a concert. They performed in English, Hebrew, and Ladino. They meet in Rockville every Thursday morning to keep their pipes warm.

Warm and wonderful **Simcha Kuritz** was elected president of the Washington Numismatic Society. Also, two of his exhibits on Jewish material, one on *Pidyon Ha-Ben* coins and tokens and another on Henrietta Szold, will be on display at the Whitman Coin Expo in the Baltimore Convention Center. Admission is free. Hey, that means you don't have to pay to see money! The exhibits will be in place from 11 a.m. Friday, March 15 through noon Sunday, March 17.

Rona M. Fields' newest book, *Against Violence Against Women: A Case for Protected Class*, published by Palgrave-Macmillan, will be issued in February. Watch for it. Cover reviews by international media personalities are "glowing."

Chapters on the Bedouin of the Negev, the Celts and Siberia are of special interest for Jewish readers. This is Dr. Fields eighth book. Other titles have been reviewed and are available through Amazon.com and on Google search.

Only So Many Hours in a Day

After almost 40 years as a Patent Examiner at the Patent Office, **Mark Berch** is retiring in early March to spend even more time posting to the TI listserv. Says Mark: "I had the incredible *mazel* to spend my entire

career in a job which was truly a perfect fit for me, avoiding all my weaknesses as a chemist and playing right to my strengths. It was a multifaceted job which was always interesting and challenging, but which I never had any trouble doing and enjoying immensely. Such a job was truly an undeserved blessing, so I was really reluctant to bring it to a close."

Speaking of undeserved blessings, in January, **John** and **Lynne List** spent a week in Kauai, Hawaii, vacationing and businessing. Highlights included hiking barefoot along many miles of beach and visits to the National Tropical Botanical Gardens on Kauai. If you feel like repeating the *b'rachah* for seeing a rainbow, go to Kauai; John and Lynne saw about two dozen during their stay. No word yet on the business side of things.

Mazel tov to **Asaf Rodenstein**, who will be making *aliyah* in February and beginning a kibbutz *ulpan* at Kibbutz Ramat Yochanan.

Do the Math

Martin Kessel and **Gail Robinson** spent ten days in Israel over the New Year together with their son, **Jonathan**, and his friend, **Erica**. The visit was primarily to celebrate Martin's 75th birthday with his three children, their families and six grandchildren. The highlight was a desert hike using steel ladders and footholds up through Nahal Tamar south of the Dead Sea.

Jonathan and Erica enjoyed an intensive two-day tour of Jerusalem with a licensed guide, **Sandy Ehrenberg**, who is also fluent in American Sign Language (ASL). In addition they were given a special tour of Yad v'Shem in ASL by former Gallaudet student, **Dalit Avnon**, who

is training to be a guide at Yad v'Shem.

Paula Tucker, **Barbara Raimondo**, **Meira Kirschbaum**, and friends boogied the night away at the Disability Power and Pride Inaugural Ball at the National Press Club. Barbara also went to the Inauguration with her exchange student guest, **Tijani**, and around 40 other exchange students from around the world. Can you say "loved the girls' coats!" in Serbian?

Sad News

Harold Newman, uncle of **Allan Kolker**, died recently. Graveside funeral services were held in Maryland.

Leo Kramer, husband of **Fradel Kramer**, father of **Anita Kramer**, and grandfather of **Joanna Kramer**, also passed away. Burial was in Sharon, Massachusetts.

Virginia Dublin, mother of **Ellen (David) Levy**, died at age 94 in December. Originally from New York City, she lived in the Hebrew Home in Rockville for the last seven years. Funeral and interment were in New York. May the families be comforted among those who mourn for Zion and Jerusalem.

And now for the meaning of last month's word, *vamoose*: "to depart quickly" (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, with "Nayes un Mekhayes" in the heading, or to P.O. Box 466, Washington Grove, MD 20880. This brings to a close a frigid edition of Nayes un Mekhayes for TI'ers.

Library News

Michele Sumka

Come to the library to see the wonderful job that our volunteers have done in inventorying and organizing our books!

Now that we have weeded out triplicates, plus old and outdated books, you can easily see the excellent books we have in U.S. History, Sephardic History, Israeli Fiction and Non-Fiction, and Jewish Thinkers, among others. Most of the Holocaust Memoirs are now in the Biography section and Holocaust Fiction is shelved with Fiction.

Major thanks to Louise Kelley, who organized the whole effort. Thanks also to Miriam Achenbach, Chaya Blonder, David Cohen, Judy Cohen, Susan Dreiband, Marcia Goldberg, Myrna Goldman, Esther Herman, Shira Jones, Allegra Levone, Beth Naftalin, Dana Neimark, Hedy Ohringer, Marla Sevi, Pearl Schainker, Bernie Shleien, Audrey Smith, Mark Verschell, and Diana Zurer. I also want to thank the TI Staff, especially Steve Ross, David Zinner, Sheri Blonder, Rabbi Seidel, and David Mackoff.

We are now in the process of ordering new books to add to our collection. If there are any categories you would like us to augment, or any specific titles you would like us to order, please contact me at msumka@gmail.com.

I am pleased that some members have recently made donations to the Library Fund and I urge more of you to do so. If you want to commemorate a birthday, anniversary, or *mitzvah* that someone has done for you, please consider a donation to the library in their honor.

February Highlights at Tifereth Israel

February 2	SHALEM, <i>James Joyce's Jewish Character</i>, Leopold Bloom, 1 p.m. Kol Nashim Game Night, 7:30 p.m.
February 3	Kadima Ice Skating at Veterans Plaza USY Israel Night
February 4, 11, 18, 25	Monday Learning <i>Parashat HaShavuah</i>, 11 a.m. Job Club, 1 p.m.
February 7-28	Gideon Amir, <i>A Modern View of Biblical Women</i>, four Thursdays, 7 p.m.
February 12, 19, 26	Michele Sumka & Susan Dreiband, <i>Spiritual Eldering through Conscious Aging</i>, first of 12 sessions, 10:30 a.m.
February 15-17	Kadima Winter Kallah
February 23	Megillah Reading
February 24	Purim, Megillah Reading Purim Carnival, 12 noon

More on Italian Jewry

Diana (and Jim) Zurer

Loretta Vitale Saks' excellent presentation [SHALEM, January 12] on Italian Jews and her family's history during the Holocaust prompted some questions afterwards about Italian Jewish sites throughout the country.

As some of you know, my husband, Jim, is an Italy trip planner. We've made over 20 trips to Italy, usually of a month's duration, and have visited all 20 regions of this beautiful and endlessly fascinating country. We have been to synagogues, museums and Jewish-related sites all over Italy. I thought TI'ers might be interested in an excerpt from one of Jim's on-line daily trip reports.

This is from last May when we spent some time in Livorno, in Tuscany.

"Livorno has been an important center of Jewish life in Italy since the 16th century when Jews...were invited to come...help develop the commercial ventures of the Medici. The[y]...mostly came from Spain and Portugal, fleeing the inquisition, [and]...numbered over 1,000 even into the 19th century when, with the decline of the port, business dried up.

A Visit to the Synagogue

"Still, there is a rich tradition of Jewish life in Livorno which was centered on the large and imposing Tempio Israelitico begun in the late 17th century. Livorno was heavily bombed during World War II and the synagogue was destroyed. The present building dates from 1962...built on the same site but in a very modern style.

"...The interior of the synagogue is more pleasing than the somewhat odd, massive concrete exterior.....very high ceilings with lots of natural light. The ark and the bima

are old—some [items] from the old Livorno synagogue, others from synagogues around Italy. The women's gallery is upstairs--this is an orthodox Sephardi synagogue.

"[T]he Jewish community in Livorno still numbers 600, down from 2,000 at the beginning of the 20th century. They do have services on Friday night and Saturday morning as well as on Monday and Thursday....[T]here is a kosher butcher shop in the market and a kosher bakery in town.

Red Cut-Glass Windows

"A striking feature are the two rectangular bands of red cut-glass windows set high up in the front wall which sends shafts of red light around the sanctuary as the sun passes overhead. The red color is supposed to represent the Jewish blood that flowed during the Holocaust.

"We also visited the smaller sanctuary in the basement where services are held during the winter.... [T]hey still use some of the...furniture that was rescued from the ruins of the old synagogue.

"[A] small Jewish museum [is] housed in an old building that used to be the local Yeshiva. There is one room with a couple of glass cases and a large gilded wooden ark. The cases have various prayer implements, Torah covers and other memorabilia....There is also a scale model and some pictures of the old synagogue which was really quite impressive.

"...[A]cross town...[is] one of the old Jewish cemeteries which was used during the 19th and most of the 20th century. It is quite overgrown... [which] gave the cemetery...a

melancholy feeling. Some of the gravestones are quite simple and plain and others are more elaborate, with carvings and sculptures. The wooden doors to the ruined building in the center of the grounds are half burnt and charred....but we don't know whether it is a result of vandalism or just accidental.

Modigliani's Home

"Our last stop...is the childhood home of the 20th century painter, Amadeo Modigliani, who grew up in Livorno and whose family was active in the Jewish community. There are rooms filled with biographical information, photographs, reproductions of Modigliani paintings, pictures of his early sculptures (he had to give it up because the dust aggravated his tuberculosis) and homages to him by Italian artists who were influenced by him.

"...Modigliani felt that he had to leave Italy because his style of painting was too radical for the very conservative Italian art establishment. So he went to Paris, leading a bohemian life as part of the early 20th century art world that was revolutionizing modern painting.

"He died an early death at age 35 (tuberculosis and meningitis)...[H]is fame world-wide is much greater than his fame in Livorno and Italy."

In 2008, we made one of two trips to the region of Basilicata, and visited Aliano, the town where Carlo Levi was exiled, and about which he wrote his book, *Christ Stopped at Eboli*. Here's a link to Jim's "blog" about our visit to Aliano:

<http://zurer.com/Italia2008/2008/10/day-10-matera.html>

I hope this has whetted your appetite about Italy and Jewish life there.

Vine and Fig, or Spring in the Desert?

Frank Solomon

If you want to help reduce public misunderstanding or lack of knowledge about Israel, Vine and Fig may be a place you could explore.

The TI leadership has for so long shied away from talking about Israel that many TI members have thought they would never hear a talk with the word "Israel" in it. In December, however, Rabbi Ken Cohen of the Vine and Fig project did just that.

Vine and Fig is an interfaith educational venture. Its mission is to help Christians and Jews better understand the historical and political realities of the modern Middle East, and to do so in a faith-based context.

According to Vine and Fig, more than 200 pro-Israel organizations and countless individuals, churches, synagogues and groups engage in interfaith dialogue in the United States. While most Christian supporters of Israel belong to moderate and liberal denominations, much of Israel's most ardent support comes from the Christian right. This often gives the impression that Israel itself is a right-wing cause.

Correcting Misimpressions

Since "right wing" is an anathema to many Christians and almost always an anathema to American Jews, those who support Israel are often assumed to be war mongers, racists, misogynists and homophobes. According to Cohen, Vine and Fig seeks to correct this image and to present an alternative. No one party, religious or political, "owns" Israel, he says.

Cohen tried to make it clear that Vine and Fig would attempt to be generically pro-Israel without taking any particular positions on Israeli government policies. Ironically, the

project holds dialog with church groups that are often highly critical of Israel. Vine and Fig provides a forum to people on the left whose views might make Israel-supporters uncomfortable.

Nevertheless, some people still assumed that the idea was to back the Netanyahu government. "That is not our position at all," Cohen says. "But I don't think some people heard that. Given that starting point, I might have expected criticism from the right, not the left."

Pro-Israel But Politically Neutral

While many good-faith people think it is impossible to be pro-Israel but maintain political neutrality, Cohen disagrees. He cites examples of institutions that transcend politics but function at the heart of the Zionist enterprise, such as the Hebrew University and the state presidency.

Many American Jews consider themselves pro-Israel but believe criticism of the Israeli government is helpful and legitimate. Cohen thinks that while criticism is essential in a democracy, demonization of Israel is neither right nor helpful.

"It is a prejudice. I would hope that there could be a consensus on that at TI and that this should not be controversial in the slightest," he says. "It is one thing to be critical, say, of the settlement policy, and quite another to regard Israel as inherently wicked while turning a blind eye to any shortcomings on the Palestinian side.

"Better for the organization to be a platform that would serve as a forum for individuals to share their own perspectives. This is the only thing that makes sense to me."

If the idea of being nonpolitical is so controversial, one could imagine how difficult it would be to have a critical platform that was any way specific and then expect to have some consensus. One might ask, "What is the difference between J-Street and your group?"

One big difference is that Vine and Fig wants to work with religious groups. Another is that Vine and Fig doesn't pretend to have answers. "Our goal is to stir discussion and provide a forum to help Israel and American Jews gain a better foothold on the issue of the conflict, or something like that," Cohen says.

Vine and Fig may make some people uncomfortable as American Jews are trying to adjust to the reality of an Israel that is not living up to their expectations. But it seems to be a necessary forum for those who want to find a solution to what they see as a stalemate in the Middle East. Coming from a pulpit where one rarely hears anything about Israel, Vine and Fig is more like a spring in the desert.

The group has set up a committee. Those interested in joining can contact Cohen at ken@vinefig.org.

Tot Shabbat

Join other families with tots (5 and under) at the next Tot Shabbat, February 16, at 11:10 a.m. A parent- led activity, Tot Shabbat includes *tefillah* (prayer), songs, Shabbat stories, Torah parade and mini-*kiddush*.

Future Tot Shabbatot will be on the third Shabbat of the month -- March 16, April 20, May 18, and June 15.

Upcoming Friday Night Minyan Assignments

February 1

Morton Simon
 David & Rona Siskind
 Audrey Smith
 Aaron & Reva Snow
 Jeffrey & Marcine Snyder
 Dan & Elizabeth Sokolov
 Frank Solomon & Laurie Russell
 Louis & Madge Lee Specter
 Phil & Dianne Spellberg
 Barry & Sari Siegel Spieler
 Gregory Stackel & Genevieve Dara
 Sapir
 Jeffrey & Julie Steinberg
 Lois C. Steinberg
 Jack Stone & Wilma Brier
 Herman & Malka Stopak
 Noam Stopak & Shelley Sturman
 Alexander & Laura Strashny
 Edwin Stromberg & Rose Ellen
 Halper

February 8

Jonathan Strum
 Marc Suddleson & Molly Surden
 Howard & Michele Sumka
 JT & Naomi Taransky
 Kassahu Teffera & Melke Mengiste
 Jevera Temsky
 Neil & Rachel Tickner
 Michael Tilchin & Linda Greer
 David & Anne Crandall Tobenkin
 Peter & Rhoda Trooboff
 Paula Tucker
 Jonathan & Cathy Tuerk
 Allan & Judy Tulchin
 Daniel & Allison Turner
 Lester & Judith Turner
 Michael & Ruth Unterweger
 Mark Verschell & Elizabeth Leff
 Sherri Vishner
 Susan Vitale

February 22

David Wachtel & Jennifer Goldstein
 Harry Waldman & Susan Morse
 Marc Warshawsky & Vivian Seidner
 Matthew Watson & Ellen Cabot
 Marc & Deborah Weinberger
 Eric Weiner & Sharon Moshavi
 Jon Weintraub & Judith Heimlich
 Michael Weiss & Phyllis Stanger
 Jessica Weissman & Louise Kelley
 Dov Weitman & Sylvia Horwitz
 Alan & Cynthia Weitz
 Howard & Barbara White
 Louise Wiener
 Peter Winch & Denice Zeck
 Adam & Dorothea Wolfson
 Marion Zatz
 Christopher Zeilinger & Ann Baker
 Yonannes Zeleke
 Diana Zurer
 Ellen Zwibak

March 1

Barbara Abrams
 Luis & Karen Acosta
 Andrew Afflerbach & Joanne Hovis
 Seth & Elaine Aksk
 Miriam Alpern
 Jon Alterman & Katherine LaRiviere
 Timothy Anderegg & Lisa
 Fogel-Anderegg
 Jon & Heidi Anderson
 Charlotte Anker
 Leonard Bachman
 Sidney & Heike Bailin
 Lawrence Baizer & Elaine Lewis
 Justin Bank
 Paul & Esther Bardack
 Burt Barnow
 Charles Baum
 Leonard & Joy Baxt
 Mark & Mona Berch
 Bruce & Laurie Berger
 Carl Bergman & Margie Odle

March 8

Judi Berland
 Joe Berman & Nancy Gentner
 Barbara Beuchert
 Dana Beyer
 Sean Blake & Larisa Aranbayeva
 Sheri Blonder
 Gideon & Lisa Blumenthal
 Ron & Dina Borzekowski
 Larry & Lise Bram
 Leonard Braverman
 Brad & Liana Brooks-Rubin
 Sharon Brown
 Stephen Burd & Laura Schiavo
 Harold Burgess & Shoshana
 Eisenberg
 Joel & Alice Burton
 Josh Burton
 Daniel Byerly & Katharine Clark
 Susan Chapin
 Daniel Chazen & Ronit Eisenbach
 David Cohen
 Joel Cohen

March 22

David & Judy Cohen
 Ann Cohen
 David & Elana Cohen
 Raymond & Rebecca Coleman
 Jeffrey Colman & Ellen Nissenbaum
 Nataliya Chernyak Cowen
 Tamir & Rebecca Damari
 Merry Danaceau
 Jeffrey & Miriam Davidson
 Joe & Kathy Davidson
 Ronni Davis
 Adam Diamond & Rabbi Jane
 Berman
 Helen Disenhaus
 Stan Dorn & Carla Ellern
 Earl Dotter & Deborah Stern
 Desirée Douglas
 Lisa Drazin
 David Drelich & Rabbi Gilah
 Langner
 Susan Dreiband & Jackie Urbanovic
 Benjamin Dreyfus & Rabbi Elizabeth
 Richman

Purim Coins

Simcha Kuritzky

The holiday of Purim is one of the most joyous in the Jewish calendar. It celebrates the Jews' victory over the Persian vizier, Haman, and his minions. However, it is not this victory that is the source of most Purim numismatic collectibles.

Purim falls in Adar, the last month of the Biblical year, and so was the time that the annual half-*shekel* temple tax was collected. The Book of Esther describes how the Jews used the temple taxes collected to try to outbid Haman, and so the tax is associated with Purim. Even after the Romans destroyed the Temple, Jews continued to contribute funds annually to the *yeshivot* in *Eretz Yisrael*, and this custom continues to this day.



Once Israel gained independence, she issued coins based on ancient designs. The highest circulating coin was the 250-*prutah* (quarter-*lira*). These were also issued in silver for collectors, along with a 500-*prutah* (half-*lira*) which portrayed a pomegranate branch used on the half-*shekels* of the First Revolt.

The 500-*prutah* had 12 grams of silver (the ancient half-*shekel* of Tyre had less than 7), but it is not known if Israelis bought them for use in the tax. However, one of the proposed designs for this denomination included the phrase *half-shekel* in Hebrew.



Israel began issuing commemorative coins in 1958, including one-*lira* coins for Hanukkah. In 1961, special half-*lira* coins were made for Purim showing the half-*shekel* coin of the First Revolt on one side and denomination and date on the other.

Unlike the Hanukkah coins, the design stayed the same the next year, but in 1963, half-*lira* coins were issued by the Bank of Israel for circulation, so Israel stopped making the special coins.



The half-*lira* was replaced with a half-*shekel* coin in 1980 (at a 10:1 ratio), though inflation soon made it worthless. In 1984, Israel began issuing silver half-*shekel* medals which portray the half-*shekel* coin with the inscription "Remember the half-*shekel*", while the other side has a geometric design combining hearts and a *Magen David*.



(Continued on page 18)

New Testament Discussion Group

February 4, a TI discussion group will hold its next session on the new book, *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*.

It will meet approximately every three weeks in the chapel on **Monday evenings**, at 8:30 p.m.

The reading for the February 4 session is the second half of Mark. Subsequent sessions are scheduled for February 25, March 4, April 15 and 29, May 20 and June 3.

A second section of the discussion group is meeting on **Wednesday mornings** at 11 a.m., also

approximately every three weeks in the chapel. The Wednesday group is a little further along in the book.

The reading for its next session, on **February 6**, is the second half of John. Other sessions are scheduled for February 27, March 13, April 10, May 1 and 22 and June 12.

Purim Coins (continued)



There are some commemorative medals. The State of Israel issued a series of medals for the various holidays, and the Purim medal shows a bottle of wine, comic hat, and three half-*shekel* medals (the tax half-*shekel* is mentioned three times in the Bible, so some Jews give three half-*shekels*).

The Judaic Heritage Society commissioned a series of ingots commemorating the holidays, and their Purim bar shows a *megilla* scroll showing Haman leading Mordechai on horseback with the King and Queen Esther behind.



A number of charities in Israel have issued receipts for donations, and many include the expression *mekhatzit hashekel* (half-shekel). This receipt from the *Histadrut HaMizrahi B'Eretz Yisrael* (Eastern Organization in the Land of Israel) is dated Adar 5702 (1942 CE).

The half-*shekel* receipt for *Yeshiva Porat Yosef B'Yisrael* (Fruitful Joseph in Israel) shows a picture of the half-*lira* coin of 1961-2 but has the denomination of one *lira*.



In the late 1990s, a number of religious charities started commissioning small silver medals the size of ancient half-*shekel* coins to be used for donations.

Shown here is a half-*shekel* by *Begeg Ivri* (Hebrew clothing) which portrays the Second Temple and lyre, and a coin from *Otzer Hamikdash* (Holy Treasure) which shows the *menorah* and Second Temple.

So be happy, it's Adar, and remember the half-*shekel* tax.



Donations

GENERAL FUND

Donor

Rachel & Sarah Meytin
 Larry Paul & Joy Newman
 Elnatan & Lianna Reisner
 Daniel & Allison Turner
 Daniel Michelson-Horowitz
 Richard & Merry Lymn
 Burt Barnow & Joyce Kaiser
 Alan Makovsky

Bernard & Debra Shleien,
 and Sue Catler

Richard & Marjorie Siegel
 Richard & Marjorie Siegel

Stuart & Charna Cohn
 James & Carla Flug

George & Marjorie Greenberg
 Joe & Kathy Davidson

Roz Timberg

Paul Goldman & Debbie
 Pomerance
 David & Janice Mehler

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 Ava Elizabeth Firschein
 Jeff Davidson's
 birthday
 Rabbi Seidel

In Memory of

Beverly Hartstein
 Leo Kramer

In Memory of

Charles Louis
 Kincannon

In Honor of

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 Neimark's 50th
 Wedding
 Anniversary

MARVIN CAPLAN SOCIAL ACTION FUND

(continued)

Donor

John & Lynne List

In Honor of

Social Action
 Shabbaton

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