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IN JANUARY & FEBRUARY

- 1/10, 24, 31 – Kids Kehillah
- 1/10 – Film: *Chariots of Fire*
- 1/17 – Film: *The Chosen*
- 1/24 – Film: *Crossing Delancey*
- 2/7, 28 – Kids Kehillah
- 2/27 – USY “Friend-Raiser” Dinner



“Judaism is a religion of time aiming at the sanctification of time.”

—Abraham Joshua Heschel
Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man
 (1975)

MISHEBERACH: A PRAYER FOR HEALING

There was a time when people did not want a *misheberach* said for them. “I’m not dying,” they would tell me. Today, our *misheberach* list is filled with people who are a long way from dying, but who may have long or short term illnesses. Their names remain on the list and more and more names are added until we are not sure for whom it is still appropriate to include. How long does one stay on the *misheberach* list? What if a person has a long term illness, but is stable? Adding a name feels like we are helping, taking a name off feels like we don’t care anymore, or worse, they might die. What should we do?

Coincidentally, the Rabbis on Ravnet are asking the same questions. Should the list begin anew each Rosh Hodesh (new month)? Should we only include the names recited by those who are present? Should we only have Hebrew names listed?

Before we attempt to answer these questions (I don’t know if we will ever answer them), I wanted to begin with a look at the prayer itself. The name of the prayer (*misheberach*) comes from the first words: *mi sheh berach* meaning, “the One who blesses...” In fact, there are many “*misheberachs*” in the Siddur (prayer book). In *Siddur Sim Shalom*, we have a *misheberach* for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, for their parents, for those who are about to be married (aufruf), for those who have completed an aliyah, for a woman who has just given birth, for the parents of new children, and for those who are ill. Their meanings are similar — May God who blessed our ancestors (patriarchs and matriarchs)

bless____, may he or she be privileged to study Torah, or may he or she be restored to health, or enjoy a safe trip, or build a home full of love, etc. In other words, we call upon God, who was so close to our ancestors, to look upon the mentioned person with the same attention, and to bless them with something specific — health, meaningful Torah

R A B B I
 CAROLYN BRAUN

study, family, as we as a community respond, “amen,” ‘so be it.’ Where so much of prayer is private, the public reading of the *misheberach* links the individual and the community.

When it comes to simchas (happy occasions) we want everyone to hear, but sometimes, in the case of illness, we want it to remain private and not public. And so, there is also a place in the silent, weekday Amidah that includes a space for a private *misheberach*. It is in the eighth blessing:

And may it be Your will, Adonai our God and god of our ancestors, to send complete healing, of body and soul, to _____, along with all others who are stricken, and strength to those who tend to them.

Here in the middle of the Amidah, we can remember all of our own friends and family, in private, and wish them healing. So in terms of healing, on weekdays at least, we have two ways to pray: publically and privately. Private prayer allows us a moment to sit with our prayer. A public reading brings the illness and the person into the consciousness of the entire community.

see **Prayer** page 8

TEMPLE BETH EL
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 (207) 774-2649
 www.templebethel-maine.org

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Shofar

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“Our vision is to be an embracing, supportive and vibrant community which observes Judaism in the Conservative tradition and which is devoted to the perpetuation of Jewish values and culture. Temple Beth El honors the diversity of its members and is committed to their spiritual growth.”

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Congregants are encouraged to make regular attendance at Temple Beth El a part of their lives.

DAILY SERVICES

Monday through Friday 6:50 AM
 Saturday and Jewish Holidays. 9:30 AM
 Sunday and Secular Holidays 8:30 AM

FRIDAY EVENING SERVICES

First Friday Evening, September–June . . . 7:30 PM
 Remaining Friday Evenings. 5:30 PM

“Do not separate yourself from the congregation.”

—Hillel, Pirkei Avot, 2:5

CLOSURES

The TBE Office will be closed Thursday, January 1; Monday January 19; and Monday, February 16.

The TBE Hebrew School will be closed Sunday, January 4; Sunday, January 18; Sunday, February 15; Wednesday, February 18; and Sunday, February 22.



Temple Beth El is a member of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.



Funding for Temple Beth El Religious School has been generously provided by the Jewish Community Alliance of Southern Maine, through its Annual Campaign.

A HEBREW HIGH THANKSGIVING SEDER

Just this past Sunday, four days before Thanksgiving, the Hebrew High students and I shared a Thanksgiving *Seder*. What's a Thanksgiving Seder you may ask? Well that's what I'd like to share with you.

While there may be many differences between Thanksgiving and *Pesach*, there are certainly similarities between the two, and the most noticeable is that the highlight of both celebrations is a festive meal.

The brilliance of the *Pesach seder* is that it takes a celebratory meal and turns it into an opportunity for all those who have gathered together to explore a variety of themes and ideas that come out remembering the exodus from Egypt. And so, it seemed that patterning another kind of *seder* after the *Pesach* one would allow us to explore some of the themes of Thanksgiving and its relationship to Judaism.

So we began our *seder* over a cup of apple cider instead of wine (and not even hard cider to the chagrin of the students) as we proclaimed our recognition of and thanks for God providing us with a world filled with food and drink. After this "*Kaddesh*" section we continued on to the "*Maggid*" section of the *seder* which focused on exploring the story of Thanksgiving and its meaning for the pilgrims, previous generations of Americans, and us. We had our own Four Questions: Why is this holiday of Thanksgiving different for us from other holidays that we celebrate as American Jews? What are the things we are thankful for this year? How can we help others who are in need during this season? Why do we eat special foods on Thanksgiving?

After discussing these questions we began to tell the Thanksgiving story. We were first reminded by a quote from Rabbi Steven Greenberg that "a people that forgets its founding stories eventually runs out of steam... With holidays there are always two stories to tell.

INTERIM
RELIGIOUS PROFESSIONAL
DOV GOLDBERG

There is a story that recalls the original event... In addition to this mythic tale, there is the story of the creation of the holiday, the story of how a particular people came in time to adopt a holiday, and how they decided to mark its memory with rituals." And so we continued by recalling the first Thanksgiving which was held by the pilgrims together with 91 Native Americans in celebration of the bountiful harvest of 1621 and which came in the wake of their first winter during which

46 of the original 102 pilgrims died. That is thanksgiving! We then learned that while there were individual one-time thanksgiving days celebrated here and there it was not until a 40 year campaign by Sarah Josepha Hale for a national day of thanksgiving finally culminated with proclamation by Abraham Lincoln in 1863. And we wondered whether President Lincoln's decision might have been influenced by the fact that the Emancipation Proclamation, the turning of the tide for the Union at the battles of Gettysburg and Vicksburg, and the dedication of a National Cemetery with Lincoln's Gettysburg Address had occurred earlier that year.

From there we discussed that the see *Seder* page 10

We reflected on what it meant to us that our Torah was the source for the idea behind Thanksgiving.

PORTLAND CHEVRA KADISHA

*In time of need,
one Jew caring
for another*



JEWISH FUNERAL HOME
PreArrangement Counseling
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Portland, ME 04103
207•774•3733



Thanks to the following individuals:

- The Sisterhood for providing eight beautiful new serving bowls for the kitchen, and to Shirley Rosen for schlepping them.
- Joy Krinsky, Rebecca Canter, and Marc Herwitz for hosting Rabbi Braun's anniversary party.
- Jim Elowitch for heading up a delicious Hebrew School Shabbat Dinner on December 19 and to all of those who assisted with cooking, setup, and cleanup.
- To Stephen and Melissa Finberg, Robert and Aileen Tabachnick, James

see *Todah* page 4

National Council of Jewish Women Scholarship

National Council of Jewish Women Southern Maine Section is pleased to announce that it will again award scholarships to Jewish students from the Greater Portland area who plan to continue their education. Scholarships are awarded on the basis of financial need in consideration of academic achievement, Jewish commitment and general community involvement. We welcome all students who fulfill the criteria to apply for these scholarships for the upcoming school year (2009–2010). For further information, contact Patty Weber or Mary Herman at ncjwscholarship@gmail.com, or contact Patty directly at Shooz61@verizon.net. Applications must be received by April 30, 2009.

Todah *continued from page 3*

and Faith Elowitch, Gil and Barbara Dichter, Emily and Stanley Chaleff, Becky and Joe Delois, Rodger and Eydie Pryzant, Matt and Lynn Goldfarb, Barry and Lori Saltz, Gregg and Pattie Garson, Irwin Gratz and Bonnie Rodden, and Charlie and Ellie Miller for sponsoring kiddushim this Fall.

■ To the Hebrew School students who celebrated Hanukkah by participating in a "Temple Re-Dedication" by cleaning windows and sorting tallisim.

Temple Beth El Adult Jewish Learning Hosts Classic Jewish Film Series

by Pat Davidson Reef

A series of films for film lovers is being planned for the month of January by the Adult Jewish Learning Committee at the Temple Beth El. It is open to the whole community and we invite you to join us for an evening of relaxation. It will be given free of charge at 7:00 PM and a snack will be served afterwards.


The movies are as follows: January 10: *Chariots of Fire* (1920's-30's), January 17: *The Chosen* (1940's-50's), and January 24: *Crossing Delancey* (1970's-80's).

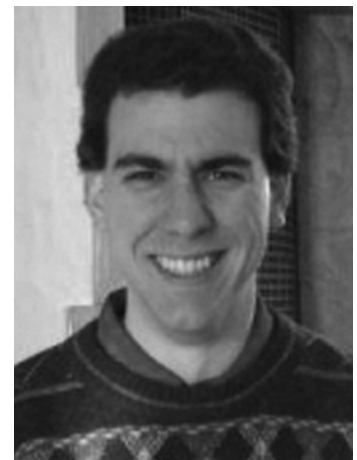
Films unite us and tell us who we are as individuals, and as a nation. They transport us into another world while allowing us to keep one foot on the ground in this world. They open the doors to better understanding of ourselves and others. Most of all films allow us to laugh

and relax together. A classic never grows old — only better!!! Save Saturday evenings in January to see some classics and have fun at the Temple.

The TBE Adult Jewish Learning Committee, under the capable leadership of Thomas Froncek, chairman, has had an active year. In October, we had an afternoon with political candidates, and a wonderful weekend of learning with Rabbi Daniel Goldfarb, Executive Director of the Conservative Yeshiva in Israel. In November, we had Dr. Stephanie Gerber Wilson, scholar from Brandeis, speak eloquently on Israel. We are planning new programs for the spring which are very exciting. Keep your eye on the activities at Temple Beth El. Our activities are stimulating, educational, and fun to experience. There is something for everyone. 

ENCOUNTERING ISLAM: AN INTRODUCTION FOR AMERICAN JEWS

Join us on March 1st at 2 PM for the first in a series of fascinating lectures by Rabbi David Freidenreich, Professor of Jewish Studies at Colby College. Rabbi Freidenreich will introduce us to Islam's sacred texts, its beliefs and practices, and its history, from Muhammad to modernity. In the course of his lectures he will pay particular attention to Islamic attitudes toward Judaism and the experiences of Jews in Muslim lands. This series of lectures is sponsored by TBE's Adult Jewish Learning Committee. 



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TOASTING RABBI BRAUN'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY

by Tom Froncek

The weather outside was frightful, but inside Temple Beth El the evening was quite delightful as some 154 congregants and friends gathered to celebrate Rabbi Braun's 20th anniversary of becoming a rabbi. The festivities, which took place on Saturday evening, December 13th, were especially meaningful since Rabbi Braun spent the last 13 of those years as the spiritual leader of our congregation.

"I can't believe it was twenty years ago," she said. "It has gone by so quickly."

From the grin on her face and the energy with which she danced later in the evening, she was obviously enjoying the party to the hilt.

Organized by Rebecca Canter, Marc Herwitz, and Joy Krinsky, the evening's festivities began with the showing of a memory video created by Jodi Veysey. In slides and music, the video gave us some wonderful – and often hilarious – peeks into the early life of Rabbi Braun: as a child in her crib, at her parents' seder table (What were those four questions again?), as a student, a hiker, a skier, and as a brand new graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

In tribute to the rabbi's years of service, TBE President Rick Finberg, and Vice-president Judy Gatchell, presented her with a gift from the board of a beautiful Torah cover, which bears an inscription honoring Rabbi's Braun's 20 years in the rabbinate. It will insure that the rabbi's service will be noted and remembered for many years to come.

Marc Herwitz presented the gift from the congregation: the Rabbi Carolyn Braun Meditation Garden, which will be installed in the spring in the inner courtyard.

Letters of appreciation came from Arnold M. Eisen, chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary; from Paul Heckler, a student of Rabbi Braun's who is currently studying in Jerusalem, and from Rhettta Huttman, on behalf of herself and her partner, Letitia. From Rabbi Braun's adult education students came a gift of a jewelry box, which was presented by James Peebles. And from Portland's mayor, Jill C. Duson, came a proclamation that December 13, 2008, would be officially known as Rabbi Carolyn Braun Day.

The presentations were followed by a

see *Toasting* page 11



PROCLAMATION HONORING RABBI CAROLYN BRAUN

WHEREAS, For the past 13 years, you have served as the spiritual leader of Temple Beth El in Portland where you have been recognized for your teachings to its youth and inspiration to all others that seek a renewal of faith; and

WHEREAS, Your work within the greater Portland community through interfaith activities has bridged cultural differences between religious denominations and has led towards peaceful, lasting dialog and new friendships; and

WHEREAS, You have advocated for continuous support of the needy within our community through performing meaningful and sustained acts of kindness where generosity has been noted in the assisting those that are in need; and

WHEREAS, This is your 20th year as a rabbi, your accomplishments are many and felt daily and encompass individuals, your congregation and our community as a whole.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT I,

Jill Duson, Mayor of the City of Portland, Maine, and the members of the Portland City Council do hereby proclaim December 13, 2008 as **Rabbi Carolyn Braun Day.**

Signed and sealed this 13th day of
December, 2008

Jill C. Duson, Mayor
City of Portland, Maine

ANNIVERSARIES

JANUARY 2009

- 1 Nachum Bitan and Sally Sandler Bitan
- 2 Carolyn Turcio-Gilman and John Riley
- 6 Linda Jacobs and Joe Manning
- 7 Sam and Deb Barouch
- 7 Richard and Adele Mack (66 years)
- 15 Charlie and Eddy Dibner
- 24 Michael and Harriet Turkanis
- 27 Michele and Ed Riley
- 29 Gilbert and Marilyn Praver (53 years)

FEBRUARY 2009

- 11 Bruce and Ellen Ruben
- 12 Jerry and Mary Carp
- 14 Denise and Bill Swyers
- 15 George and Bobbie Gordon (40 years)
- 18 Laurence Gardner and Alison Noiles
- 18 Naum and Zhenya Litvin
- 19 Mihai and Nora Ciffer
- 19 Tara and Mike Turcotte
- 23 Richard and Frances Carvel (59 years)
- 25 Rena and Michael Becker (20 years)
- 26 Larry Brown and Sandi Goodman-Brown (10 years)
- 26 Josh and Anne Praver

TBE ANNUAL APPEAL — END OF YEAR GIVING

Dear Temple Beth El Families,

I am pleased to report that thus far, Temple Beth El has received \$24,977 in pledges and donations from 95 families in support of this year's annual appeal. We are well within reach of our budgeted goal for raising \$30,000. As you know, the Campaign is our only major annual fundraising effort, and is crucial to the continuing strength of our Temple. These are most challenging economic times, but with just \$5,000 left to raise from the remaining 74% of our members, each contribution, no matter the size, will help us reach our mark together.

If you have not yet had a chance to make a pledge to the Annual Appeal, we ask that you keep us in mind as you make your end of the year donations. In order to be counted on your 2008 taxes, donations in the form of a credit card must be called in to the Temple office by 12:00 noon on Wednesday, December 31st; donations in the form of a check must be dated in 2008 and received at the Temple office by Wednesday, January 7th.

Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Paul Muscat, M.D.

Chair,

Annual Campaign Committee



TIKKUN OLAM PROJECTS

Tikkun Olam Food Collection

The Tikkun Olam Committee continues to collect food and personal care items for the Preble Street Resource Center. The Resource Center reports that they continually run low on kitchen staples such as beans, rice, pasta and canned tomatoes and sincerely appreciate including these anytime you drop items off at the Temple. Other non-perishable food or pantry items are also appreciated, including paper goods (paper towels, etc.). Personal care/toiletry items such as toothpaste, combs and brushes are also always needed. Towels that are in good condition and white socks are always welcome as well. You can place your donations in the Preble Street bins in the front lobby area at TBE. Thank you for your continued support of this worthwhile project! The Tikkun Olam Committee meets approximately once a month on a Sunday morning and always welcomes new members. For more information, contact Barbara Peisner at 797-6651, or bpeisnel@maine.rr.com.

Tikkun Olam Supports Project Feed

Shaw's Supermarkets supports Project Feed through collecting Shaw's

receipts and returning a portion of the monies spent to this worthwhile program. The Tikkun Olam Committee continues to assist Shaw's with the effort. Please bring in your Shaw's receipts to the Temple and put them in the collection box found on the front foyer table. Or you can send your receipts to Project Feed at Woodfords Congregational Church, 202 Woodford Street, Portland, Maine 04103.

Tikkun Olam In Need Of Soup Kitchen Volunteers

The fourth Thursday of every month from 5:30–7:30 PM continues to be the day and time in which Temple Beth El members join with Bet Ha'am and other community members to serve dinner at the Wayside Soup Kitchen at 252 Oxford Street in Portland. Volunteers are desperately needed to assist with this project! Children over the age of 12 are able to help as long as they are accompanied by an adult. For more information, please contact Harlan Baker at 772-9640 or hbaker@maine.edu or just show up at the Soup Kitchen on the 4th Thursday of the month. Please enter through the "volunteer door" which is beyond the first entrance.

KEEP THE OIL BURNING: LOCAL JEWISH RESPONSE TO THOSE IN NEED

Hanukkah is a celebration of the miracle of the oil that lasted not one night, but for eight warm and wonderful nights. This Hanukkah, area synagogue congregations joined together with Jewish Family Services, to create another miracle of oil; we are helping our neighbors' oil last through the winter.

The "Keep the Oil Burning" campaign is raising money for the Rita Willis Emergency Relief Fund to assist families in our community who find themselves dangerously low on heating fuel and are in need of help. The fund also assists with other emergency needs.

Each area congregation is asking its members to consider what they might be able to give, or even give up, so that we can respond as a unified Jewish community in this time of great need. It is the hope of the Temple Beth El religious and lay leadership that the generosity of the TBE congregation will make a significant impact on this funds' ability to last through the winter.

If you have any questions, or would like to contribute, please contact Karli Jaffe at Jewish Family Services (kjaffe@mainejewish.org, 772-1959) or Liz Rose-Cohen at Temple Beth El (execdir@templebethel-maine.org, 774-2649).

Though Hanukkah is over, it will take continued effort to keep the oil burning this winter. Let's make it last one hundred nights! 🕯️



GOODSEARCH WEBSITE HELPS WITH FUNDRAISING EFFORTS AT TBE

TBE supporters can raise money for the Temple by using GoodSearch to search the Internet. GoodSearch.com is the search engine with a unique social mission. It's powered by Yahoo, so you get the same great search results, but each time you do a search,

GoodSearch makes a donation to TBE! Fifty percent of advertising revenue from GoodSearch is returned as a donation to the nonprofits and schools selected by its users. Stop Googling and start GoodSearching! 🕯️



Welcome New Members

Richard and Ellen Maringione and daughters, Dori (14) and Jenna (11), of Portland.

Sandrea Elyse Kornblurn of Windham.

In Our Community

Free Subscription To Today Israel E-Magazine

Temple Beth El members are invited to sign up for a free subscription to Today Israel e-magazine by visiting <http://www.todayisrael.com/>. Today Israel is a publication of the United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism.

JCA Basketball

Mondays and Thursdays from 8:30-9:30 PM, the JCA invites men and women of all ages and abilities to join in on pickup basketball. Come meet people, get a little exercise and have a lot of fun! The Monday game will be held at the Breakwater School on Brighton Ave. and Thursday games will be at the University of New England on Stevens Ave. Season passes are available for \$105 from the JCA. Players are also welcome to pay by the day at a cost of \$5 a session. Exact payment must be given to the program supervisor before playing at the start of each session. For more info, contact the JCA at 772-1959, or Ken Levinsky at klevinsk@maine.rr.com.

Conservative Movement Website

The Conservative movement might be a big tent, but even such a structure needs one main entrance. The move-

see *Community* page 9

IN OUR TBE FAMILY

Mazel Tov

To Lauren & Liz Rose-Cohen, big sister Willa, and big brother Jonas Sincere, who brought home their new baby, Freedom, born on November 20.

To Lynnea Harding, daughter of Pam & Randy Harding, who appeared in Lyric Music Theater's production of *Annie Warbucks*.

To the following Deering High School students for making the first quarter Honor Roll: Jesse Barkin, Ben Barlock, Rebecca Elowitch, Noah Finberg, Elicia Fortier, Sam Goldberg, Alyssa Ladd, Andrea Levinsky, Rebecca Silver, Noah Sleeper, and Ariana Solodar-Wincele.

We mourn the passing of:

Carol Davidson, sister of Minna Noone, on November 9, in Portland.

Rita S. Willis, a founding member of Temple Beth El, widow of the late Lester Willis and mother of Stephen, Mark, & Robert, on November 27, in Portland.

Florine Sulka, widow of the late Sol Sulka and mother of Joy and Arlee, on Friday, December 5, in Portland.

Constance "Mae" Topp, great aunt of Adam Arens, on December 13, in North Carolina.

Nissel Rosenbaum Byers, former Temple Beth El member, on December 14, in Missouri.

Max Milstein, father of Lorry Stillman, on December 22, in Falmouth.

Prayer *continued from page 1*

Which brings me to the very difficult area of what should remain private and what should be made public. This is a tough line to navigate. The HIPAA laws maintain each person's privacy. That is why the hospitals only allow specific people to know who is a patient, and then forbid them to publicize anyone's presence or condition. You may remember the lists of Jewish patients that used to be circulated from synagogue to synagogue letting us know who was in the hospital. This is no longer legal without the patient's permission. The same is true for a *misheberach* for healing. There are some people who simply do not want the congregation to know. If I do not know a person's Hebrew name, and I want to say a *misheberach* for them, I will add them to my private prayer, knowing that they are remembered. I may also think about them during the public recitation of the *misheberach* in order to maintain their privacy.

So how do we answer the question with which I opened this column? How long should one remain on the list? There are many approaches to this issue. My suggestion is that we keep our friends and family on the list for a month. Then each Rosh Chodesh we begin the list again. If those we are thinking about are stable or on the mend, we can wait until there is a change in their condition before


(re)listing their name; if they are in a crisis, or experiencing a downturn, we should place their name on the list. Once the crisis is over, we can include them in our personal prayers along with those who are stable until there is a change. It is always appropriate to mention their name (if they have given permission) when the reader pauses and solicits names, but you must be present to have their name read. This way, we can keep track of who is ill, and not be overwhelmed by all the illness represented by the list.

Finally, you don't have to be terribly ill to have a *misheberach* said. I am a firm believer of wishing health to those with colds, or with breaks or sprains, or just having a bad day or week.

Permit me to close with a laugh, as we think about family and friends for whom we wish a *refuah shlemah* (complete healing).

An elderly man goes to the doctor complaining of aches and pains all over his body. After a thorough examination, the doctor gives him a clean bill of health. "Chayim, you're in fine shape for an eighty-year-old. After all, I'm not a magician — I can't make you any younger," said the Doctor. "Who asked you to make me younger? Just make sure I get older!" From the *Great Jewish Joke Book* by Alan King

Wishing you good health over these winter months,

Rabbi Braun 

BUDDING ARTISTS!


by Amy Brier

On Sunday, December 7, 2008 the Temple Beth El Social Hall was a buzz with Kol Yeladim families. We began with some Hanukkah trivia. It is amazing how much our youngest children know about Hanukkah! Then we brought out the menorah making kits where our budding artists went to work.

It was so exciting to see families building these beautiful wooden menorahs and creating a design that would provide memories for a lifetime. Many of



the families spoke of how this project was the first menorah that they made as a family and how special it was that they were given this opportunity. This is what Kol Yeladim is about, providing opportunities to learn and create meaningful Jewish experiences.


Please keep an eye out for upcoming Kol Yeladim events and contact Temple Beth El for more information. Kol Yeladim is open to families with children 0-5 years old. 

COME TO KIDS KEHILLAH!


Kids Kehillah Shabbat morning services for children in grades K-6 will be held in the school wing. Debbie Kanter leads an age appropriate one-hour service starting at 9:30 AM. Bob Tabachnick and his son Elijah read from the Torah, and parents and siblings are always welcome.

Kids Kehillah provides an opportunity for children to practice the songs/prayers they are learning in Hebrew school and to become familiar with new ones. It's also a great time for families to meet each other.

Upcoming Service Schedule:

- January 10 – 6th grade leading
- January 24 – Kindergarten/1st grade leading
- January 31 – 3rd grade leading
- February 7 – 2nd grade leading
- February 28 – 5th grade leading
- March 7 – Kindergarten/1st grade leading
- March 14 – 4th grade leading
- March 21 – 3rd grade leading 

USY UPDATE

USY had a Pre-Hanukkah Party/Cedars Shabbat on December 12 which was a blast. Thank you to all those involved in making this event successful. In January, USY will have USY lounge/meeting night, leading Shabbat services at Cedars, and volunteering at Ronald McDonald House. In February, USY will be having a lounge/monthly meeting, leading a Cedars Shabbat service, Snow Tubing, and the annual "friend-raiser dinner" on Friday, February 27, immediately following services at 5:30 PM. For more information and how you can be involved, contact Rebecca at rcanter@maine.rr.com. 

Community continued from page 7

ment's new website is a gate into the movement. www.conservativejudaism.org. Smaller gateways lead to the various organizations and groups that make up its larger whole. The website is still very much a work in progress, but it is now open and available for use. Look at it, play around with it, see what it has, figure out what it needs, and pass it on.

■ Mah Jongg At The JCA

Mah Jongg Game nights are held at the JCA on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month from 6:30 to 9:30 PM. Mah Jongg Lessons are taught by Lisa Arens on Monday nights from 6:30 to 9:30 PM. To register call 772-1959x110 or email fsilverman@mainejewish.org.

■ Mah Atah M'Chapes (21+ social group)

Wednesdays, 9:30 PM: Salsa dancing lessons by Ben Strick at 51 Wharf Street, Portland. \$5 includes dancing until 1:00 AM. <http://www.myspace.com/mainesalsadance>

First Thursdays 8:00 PM-11:00 PM: Leah Finkelstein performs at The Dogfish Bar & Grill on Free Street. <http://www.myspace.com/leahfinkelstein>.

For more information about Mah Atah M'Chapes events, contact Fae Silverman at mahatahmchapes@gmail.com.

DONATIONS TO TEMPLE FUNDS

We are grateful for the following gifts to our Temple Funds. Donations not designated for specific funds will be placed in the General Fund.

Donations to a Temple Fund provide a wonderful opportunity to remember loved ones, honor friends and family and continue to bring strength to our Temple Beth El community. We encourage your donations and welcome your thoughtfulness.

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Seder *continued from page 3*

idea for the first Thanksgiving was deliberately taken by the pilgrims from the bible and its talk of the Festival of *Sukkot* in celebration of the Fall harvest. We reflected on what it meant to us that our *Torah* was the source for the idea behind Thanksgiving. And we also considered the unique nature of Thanksgiving as an American holiday which has a spiritual element to it and is yet not overtly religious.


We then read three Thanksgiving stories of past Americans. One took place on a poor Nebraska farm in 1873. Another told of a 1930's Thanksgiving day revolt of poor Vermont marble quarry workers against the wealthy family that owned the quarry, and in effect, the

town as well. The third story came from a New York Jew in 1939, who in the shadow of the coming holocaust tells of the spreading celebration of Thanksgiving among American Jews. Some of us then shared our own Thanksgiving stories.

Like a *Pesach seder* we had our own *Seder Plate*. It contained traditional Thanksgiving foods, a pumpkin, (Indian) corn, cranberries, and a (chocolate) turkey. And we touched on the history and meaning of these foods besides their common connection to the Thanksgiving feast. From there we went on to "*Shulchan Orech*," the meal portion of the *seder*. Among other things we enjoyed corn bread, pumpkin muffins, macaroni and cheese, dried cranberries, popcorn, and pumpkin pie (with whipped cream). And though we didn't

hide the *afikoman* or anything else, we did conclude the meal by eating the chocolate turkey and then reciting a grace after meals.

To finish our *seder* we had a brief "*Hallel*" section with Psalm 100, A Psalm of Thanksgiving. And then we concluded with the "*Nirtzah*" section in which we asked God to grant us and our families a joyous Thanksgiving, and to help us appreciate the blessings that come from God, our parents, family and friends.

So, even though you weren't with us, now you know how we prepared for Thanksgiving with our own little Thanksgiving *seder*. Hopefully, it helped us appreciate Thanksgiving a little better. And perhaps it can serve as a reminder to us of how and why we should be thankful throughout the year. 

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*Donations listed were received at Temple
Beth El by December 3, 2008.*

Toasting *continued from page 5*

program of Israeli dances, led by Orly Kahn. Pop music dancing came next, with music organized and presented by Rhettta Huttman.

Other contributors to whom thanks are due include: Temple Sisterhood members Kathy Aranson, Karen Farber, Hedy Cohen, Debbie Kanter, Recia Richman and Lisa Plotkin; and synagogue members Dan Skwire, Paul & Sarah Muscat, Patty Weber, Olivia Solodar & Elliott Wincele, Elaine Rosen, Tom Berman, Dov Goldberg, Robert Levine & Vilean Taggersell, Lynn Goldfarb, and Karen Lerman.

To Rabbi Braun, the evening was a very large Mazel Tov from the entire Temple Beth El family. 🥳



shofar

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Shofar Deadlines – February E-Shofar is January 13; March Shofar is January 28.

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