



CONSTRUCTION UPDATE



Exciting things are happening as the pieces of Beth El's construction project begin to fall into place! What follows is the first of several articles that will be published periodically in the *Scroll*, as further details become available. This will be in addition to a series of meetings with Beth El auxiliaries and other special interest groups, as well as the Congregation at large, to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to understand exactly what the work will entail, what the schedule will be, and other aspects of the project.

By way of background, members will remember that we are now approaching the end of a process that began over four years ago when Suzanne Bronheim, Beth El president at that time, led the congregation in a series of meetings, focus groups, and extensive discussions about how both individual congregants and also Beth El constituencies viewed the needs of the congregation with respect to the facility. This process continued over several years, and all of the accumulated information was provided to the architects, Levin/Brown and Associates, who then put together a preliminary plan that took into account as many of these wishes and needs as possible. Of course, some issues could not be resolved. Of these, some were as large as our ongoing parking problem and others were much smaller. However, the architects made every effort to accommodate the needs expressed by members and still stay within budget.

Concurrently, we began a major fundraising effort, and were fortunate enough to raise over \$7 million, which was more than twice the amount initially predicted in our feasibility study. This meant that we were able to do many more things than originally planned without significantly impacting our mortgage or our dues.

Continued on Page 5

Shabbat Services

Friday, February 2

6:30 pm Friday Evening Service

Saturday, February 3

Bo: Exodus 10:1-13:16

7:30 and 9:15 am Shabbat Services

9:15 am Daniel Koblenz Bar Mitzvah

9:50 am Worship and Study Minyan, APR

10 am Jr. Congregation, Chapel
Gan Shabbat, MR

11 am Shitufim Minyan, Room 209

12:30 pm Perek Yomi, Chapel

Friday, February 9

6:30 pm Friday Evening Service

Shabbat Shalom at Home

Saturday, February 10

Shabbat Shirah

B'shalach: Exodus 13:17-17:16

7:30 and 9:15 am Shabbat Services

9:15 am Ilana Ross Bat Mitzvah

9:30 am Minyan Chaverim, MR

10 am Jr. Congregation, Chapel

10:30 am Nitzanim, APR

12:30 pm Perek Yomi, Chapel

Friday, February 16

6:30 pm Friday Evening Service

Saturday, February 17

Yitro: Exodus 18:1-20:23

7:30 and 9:15 am Shabbat Services

9:15 am Joshua Frankel Bar Mitzvah
Eric Weissman Bar Mitzvah

10 am Jr. Congregation, Chapel
Learners' Minyan, APR
Gan Shabbat, MR

11 am Shitufim Minyan, Room 209

12:30 pm Perek Yomi, Chapel



February 2, 2001

9 Shevat 5761

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Sisterhood News

Challah-Baking Workshop

As part of Beth El's Shabbat Shalom at Home, Sisterhood is offering a Challah-Baking Workshop on Friday, February 9 from 9 am to noon. If you are interested in participating in this workshop, or if you would like more information, please call Michelle Hainbach at 301-986-0122.

February Book Group Discussion

The Sisterhood Book Discussion Group will meet on February 11 at 9:30 am to talk about *After Long Silence*, by Helen Fremont. The book is available in the Montgomery County library system. Everyone who is interested is invited. If you have any questions, please call Andrea Golden at 301-294-2375 or Annette Moshman at 301-229-4040.

Save the Date

The Sisterhood's annual **Women's Seder** will be held on Sunday, March 25 from 5:30-8:30 pm. More details and a reservation form will appear in a later issue of the *Scroll*.

Rosh Hodesh Study Group

The final session of the Rosh Hodesh Study Group meets on Thursday, February 22 at 7:30 pm in the Board Room. Marilyn Fine will discuss "Jewish Liturgy: An In-depth Look at the Text of Our Worship Service." No reservations are required and you need not have attended previous sessions.

Nursery School Applications Available

Nursery School applications for 2001-2002 are available; please call 301-652-8569, ext. 344. Provide the information requested and an information packet/application will be mailed to you. Beth El Nursery School offers programs for 20-24 month old children in the Parent/Toddler program, and programs for children who are 2, 3 and 4 years old.

Premarital Counseling

Rabbi Maltzman is forming a premarital counseling group. If you are interested in being part of a steering committee, please call him at 301-652-2606, ext. 319.

Men's Club News

Purim Carnival

Reserve the date March 4 for the upcoming Purim Carnival. Games, food, fun for the entire family. The Carnival will run from noon until 3 pm. Tickets discounted if purchased in advance. Watch for details on the website and in the Scroll. Volunteers are needed. Please contact Bernie Rod at 301-299-8362 or rod@erols.com.

Community Based Shelter

A heartfelt thank you to all the volunteers who helped make the evening at the Community Based Shelter a great success: **David Levine, Jack Epstein and family, Michael Siegel and Anne Solotar and family, Vince Prada and Jana Singer and family, Roy Millenson, Ted Meltzer, Alex and Beatrice Rosenberg, and Sam and Eleanor Frishman.** Kudos to **Howard Goldblatt** for organizing the Men's Club efforts.

Blue Yarmulke Award

David Goldman posthumously received the Blue Yarmulke award at the Seaboard Region Award Dinner on January 21 at Adas Israel.

World Wide Wrap

Thanks to all who participated in the recent World Wide Wrap, an international demonstration of traditions which (literally) bind us as a religious community. Special thanks to Rabbi William Rudolph for his leadership role in related local Beth El activities.

Perspectives in Dialogue

The recent series of presentations by experts in the Israeli peace process, the human genome project, and American foreign policy was well attended. The discussions were lively, and most left well-nourished in both mind and body.

Sunday Programs

On Sunday mornings, the bagel and lox breakfast follows the 9 am Minyan, with the program from 10-11 am. Check the Beth El website or Men's Club poster in the Rotunda for details.

Here's The Pitch

If you're not already a member of the Men's Club, please consider joining. The Men's Club sponsors youth programs including scouting, the Purim carnival, Israeli scholarships, school books, Bar Mitzvah kiddush cups, and other important activities. Your participation makes it possible! For membership information, call Marvin Yudkovitz at 301-564-4580.

Membership Information

Change of address: **Herman and Paula Kleine**, 4615 North Park Avenue, Apt. 103, Chevy Chase, MD 20815, 301-656-3271.

Shabbat Shalom at Home

On February 9 (16 Shevat 5761), Congregation Beth El will celebrate our fourth annual *Shabbat Shalom at Home* and no one need celebrate alone. We hope you have sent or received a yellow invitation postcard. This year's copy of the How-to Guide to your Home Friday Night Service should already be in your homes. We appreciate that many of you have kept the guide to celebrating Shabbat in years past. If you have an extra guide, share Shabbat by giving it to a guest at your table, a relative far away, or a child headed for college.

Few religious practices rival the importance of Shabbat observance in making a difference in how we conduct our lives and how we survive in our hectic world. Choose February 9 to add something new to your lifelong practice of Shabbat. For those who do not observe regularly, we urge you to make a special effort to participate on February 9.

Happy first birthday wishes to Lily Steiger, whose parents had the joy of reciting the blessing over the children for the first time during last year's Shabbat Shalom at Home.

Audio tapes of **Sally Heckelman** singing the tunes for the Friday night service on one side and the Havdallah service on the other are still available from Sarah Roark. We hope this evening will bring special meaning and enjoyment to each of you. And needless to say, we hope that *Shabbat Shalom at Home* will not be just a one-time event, but the beginning of a richer and more consistent Friday night observance for many members.

As always we would appreciate hearing your reactions to this or any Family Education program. You can call Sarah Roark, Director of Family Education at 301-652-8573, ext. 320 or e-mail at sroark@bethelmc.org.

Nominating Committee in Search of Officers and Trustees for 2001

A Nominating Committee, chaired by immediate past president Norman Eule, has been formed to propose nominees for synagogue officers and trustees for the coming year. It is important that the congregation select qualified people and provide leadership opportunities to individuals seeking to serve our membership and community.

If you are interested in a position, or wish to present the name of someone for a position, please contact Norman Eule at 301-913-5770. The slate of the Nominating Committee will be presented to the Board of Directors and voted on at the Congregation's Annual Meeting on Tuesday, May 22, 2001. In accordance with our constitution, additional nominations may be made to the chair of the Nominating Committee by written petition of 25 or more members in good standing no later than April 15, 2001.

Congratulations to Jewish Day School Graduates

On Sunday, February 11, the following eleven Beth El congregants will be among the graduates in the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School class of 2001: **Erica Cohen, Moshe Eckmann, Rachel Eisenstadt, Aaron Finbloom, Julia Goldstein, Elana Graber, Emily Kavalier, Ari Lerman, Rebecca Maltzman, Eric Nussenblatt, and Rebecca Ostrov.**

The JDS graduating class plans to spend the four months following graduation living and studying in Israel. Many will precede their stay in Israel with a one-week trip to Poland and Prague.

The congregation will honor these JDS students during Shabbat morning services on February 10.

Congregation Beth El extends congratulations to each of the graduates and their families.

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BETH EL SISTERHOOD

Presents

**AGING AND FAMILY DYNAMICS:
MY PARENTS, MY CHILDREN AND ME**

Sunday, February 11, 2001
12 Noon to 4 PM

Please Join Us for a Delicious Lunch Followed by

**Keynote Speaker
David Gamse**

Executive Director of the Jewish Council for the Aging

Breakout Sessions: (Select Two)

The Sandwich Generation: Finding Emotional Peace

Mona Michaels Pollack, Ph.D., LCSW-C
Gerontologist and Clinical Social Worker

Practical/ Legal Advice for Care Givers, Long Distance and Local

Nora Jean Levin
*Author of How to Care for Your Parents:
A Practical Guide to Elder Care
Elder Care Advisor and Advocate*

Capture the Memories: Life Histories on Video

Ron Levin, LCSW-C
Clinical Social Worker

Yakkety Yak, E-Mail Back:

Helping Older Family Members Use the Internet

Dunya Hecht, MS, and Barbara Moskowitz
Elder Care Consultants

Men and Women Welcome

No Charge

No Reservations Needed

Questions? Call Ellen Eule (301) 320-3669 or Laurie Webber (301) 652-1510

Continued from page 1

As you may recall, last fall, just prior to Yom Kippur, a revised set of floor plans was posted in the Gallery and was also available for viewing at our two off-site High Holiday service locations. Some minor modifications have been made since then to better meet our needs and to respond to issues that have arisen as we planned construction (e.g. location of sewer lines). However, it is anticipated that these drawings, for the most part, represent what Beth El will look like by the time we approach the High Holidays 2002. They are the culmination of many months of work by the Construction Committee, chaired by congregant Don Silverstein, with the aforementioned input from all the auxiliaries and other special interest groups within Beth El.

As of this writing, the Construction Committee, which is composed of Beth El members who are professionals in construction and other related areas, is awaiting colored renderings from our architect. Once these are in hand, there will again be meetings with auxiliaries and other constituent groups, and this process will culminate with a Congregational Meeting to approve proceeding with the project. A more specific construction schedule and a financial model of the costs will also be available at this meeting. In the meantime, permit applications will begin, as this could take three to four months.

Right now, we anticipate that the first phase will begin in April 2001 and will last approximately one year. This will include the demolition of everything from the stairwell in the school wing (the one closest to the front doors) through the Gallery, administrative and clergy offices, and the chapel, as well as the two houses that Beth El purchased at the south end of our property. A new three-story structure will then be constructed, providing much-needed classroom space, a larger chapel and secondary social hall, enhanced office areas, upgraded restrooms, and other amenities. This will allow Beth El to function as a synagogue with over 1,000 member households and the wide range of activities currently on our calendar. While this work is underway, synagogue offices will be relocated in the rear of the Social Hall, reducing the usable space in that area by about one-third. And while there is certain to be some disruption (as with any kind of renovation and construction), planning is now taking place to ensure that synagogue services and activities will continue during this period. In the spring of 2002, when the construction phase is completed, the temporary offices in the social hall will be dismantled and staff will move into the new wing. The new chapel and secondary social hall will be ready for use, and some of the new classrooms will be available for occupancy.

At that time, the second phase of the project will commence, and will include the upgrading and renovation of the sanctuary, social hall, kitchen, and the existing school wing. During the period when the sanctuary is unavailable for use, services will be conducted in the new chapel/social hall, which will be able to accommodate approximately 400 people. Work in the classrooms will take place over the summer 2002 to avoid disruption during the school year. All work should be completed prior to the High Holidays 2002.

Should you have a question at any time regarding this project, please contact Sheila Bellack in the synagogue office at ext. 306.

Siddur 101 Available Now!

Hazzan Abraham Lubin's guide to the prayer book for Shabbat, *Siddur 101*, is now available for purchase in the Sisterhood Judaica Shop for \$7.50 per copy. The Judaica Shop is open on Sunday and Thursday mornings from 9 am to noon.

Mitzvah Mall

Thank you so much to all the generous people who made donations to the Mitzvah Mall in December, 2000. The Mitzvah Mall, a combined effort of Family Education and Social Action, enables people to make donations and receive a gift card to give to someone in place of a holiday gift. The program has received increased donations each year. This year we raised a thousand dollars more than last year. For the second time, we are able to send a huge amount of newly purchased underwear (a constant and most basic need) to the Interfaith Clothing Center. We also raised money to support the excellent work done by the following organizations: Bethesda Cares, Capital Area Food Bank, Magen David Adom, Shepherd's Table, and Whitman Walker Clinic. Thank you to the volunteers who took donations on Sundays in the Rotunda: Annette Abrams, Abbie Eckland, Andrea Golden, Michelle Hainbach, Herman Kleine, Janice Liebowitz, Danielle Srouer and Carol Miller.

At the time of major life cycle events, particularly serious illnesses or deaths, members of Beth El expect and deserve timely responses to requests for support. Appropriate arrangements, including the participation of other members of the clergy if desired, can be assured by contacting Rabbi Jonathan Maltzman at 301-652-2606, ext. 319 at the synagogue, or 301-530-9199 at home, or Sheila Bellack, our Executive Director, at 301-652-2606, ext. 306.

Congregation Beth El of Montgomery County Third Annual Community Torah Institute

In our struggle for spiritual connection, is the G-d of the Torah accessible in our age?

Wrestling With G-d: What is the Connection Between the G-d of the Torah and Our Lives?

Sunday, February 25, 2001
1:00 to 4:45 p.m.



Rabbi Robert Harris
Assistant Professor of Bible
Jewish Theological Seminary
New York, New York



Rabbi Elyse Goldstein
Director of Kolel: The Adult Centre
for Liberal Jewish Learning
Toronto, Canada



Rabbi Shmuel Goldin
Rabbi
Congregation Ahavath Torah
Englewood, New Jersey

Please join **Rabbi Jonathan Maltzman** and
Rabbi William Rudolph
when they host this distinguished panel of
Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform scholars
to explore the struggle to relate to an ancient
G-d in a modern world. Gain new perspectives as the scholars call upon
their different backgrounds and training to explore and enlighten.

Admission is free. Refreshments will be served.
Call (301)652-2606 ext. 318 to make your reservation.
Or visit our website, www.communitytorahinstitute.org

Congregation Beth El

8215 Old Georgetown Road

Bethesda, Maryland

Set the Table with Torah

by Rabbi William Rudolph

An introductory word: a discussion about the week's Torah portion is a good Shabbat dinner custom. Make the discussion as long or short, as simple or complicated, as your dinner crowd can handle.

Bo (Exodus 10:1-13:16)

This portion continues the narrative that culminates with the exodus of the Israelite slaves from Egypt. It begins with the eighth and ninth plagues that were brought on the Egyptians, followed by preparations for the exodus including the sacrifice of the paschal lamb and placing its blood on the doorposts. Then the Israelites are told to take possession of much of the wealth of the Egyptians. Then comes the horrific final plague on the Egyptian first born followed by the midnight journey towards freedom.

Morality is always on our minds, and this parashah raises more moral issues than any other. One is about the wealth of the Egyptians. Why did the Israelites need gold and silver in the wilderness, and what right did they have to despoil the Egyptians as they departed? Another issue is the slaying of the first born. Couldn't G-d have found a different, less destructive, way than this of finally convincing Pharaoh to let His people go? And the final issue, actually first in the portion, is about G-d's hardening Pharaoh's heart so that he would not let the Israelites go free until they (and Pharaoh's people) had suffered more.

Let's concentrate on that last issue. Check your Chumashim, or the web, for discussions of the others. These are tough questions; don't expect easy answers.

The issue of free will is what is at the heart of this account of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. If G-d promised Abraham that his descendants would serve as slaves for 400 years to a nation that would work them hard, how could the Israelites have avoided what was to happen to them? Put this way, Pharaoh was just a pawn in G-d's hands. How can we blame him for performing what had already been decreed?

The commentary of the Malbim is helpful. He teaches that, yes, G-d does have a plan, but the way in which the plan unfolds is completely up to us. We determine how the events will occur. We have free will.

Thus, the Israelites were to work hard for a foreign country. However, the Egyptians determined which country it would be, because they enslaved the children of Jacob. Yes, the Israelites were to work hard. But it was never foretold that their male children would be put to death. The Egyptians greatly exceeded what the divine plan required.

Similarly, Pharaoh, during the first plagues, is given a real chance to let the children of Israel go. G-d does not harden Pharaoh's heart until the latter plagues. Had Pharaoh let them go during the plague

of the blood, using his free will, there would have been less suffering and we would never have had the other nine plagues for which to dip our fingers in the wine!

Talk with your Shabbat guests about whether you see a divine plan in the world or think everything happens by human action. Do you see a divine plan working in Jewish history and keeping us going as other more powerful empires disappear? How can we understand Jewish tradition when it says that we exercise free will but there is also a divine plan? And how do we deal with G-d supposedly knowing everything that we have done and will do, while at the same time we are totally free to do whatever we want. Are we really free to do whatever we want?

B'shalach (Exodus 13:17-17:16)

This portion begins with the crossing of the Red (or Reed) Sea. You may have seen the movie. Pharaoh changes his mind and pursues the Israelites, but the waters divide and the Israelites pass safely through. On the other side, they sing the Song at the Sea; that song gives this Shabbat its name, Shabbat Shirah (the Sabbath of the Song). Then the journey begins, already marked by the people's complaints. Miracles (here, manna) are performed to help meet their needs. Mt. Sinai beckons.

The miracle of the manna ends in a fascinating if disturbing way. Manna was bread from Heaven, a miracle food that sustained the Israelites during their many years of desert wandering after the exodus. Surprisingly, after a while the Israelites grew to hate the manna. Twice they rebelled against Moses because of it. Why?

The best explanation for this loathing of the miracle bread is that it came too easily. It took no effort to prepare or collect. It came to symbolize 40 years of wandering that left the people listless, dependent, even depressed, because their life was actually too easy. That doesn't seem to make sense, but the inertia of doing little or nothing, that was the curse contained in the manna. It took away from the people the need to build their life, to work and produce on their own, to be self-sufficient. It explains why they were always complaining and murmuring, even though all their needs were taken care of. If everything comes too easily, there can be no joy or sense of accomplishment.

Are we victims of the same curse? Do we too often hope to find the easy way, the gift from Heaven, instead of pursuing the more demanding path that will make us feel self-sufficient? Do we let others build for us, plant for us? Do we replace research with web-surfing? Do we buy our loved ones lots of expensive gifts because that is easier than giving them time and caring? Do we as parents anticipate and solve every problem for our children so that their

lives will be easy? I think we all do those things to some extent. What is the long term effect? Is there a lesson in the miracle manna that saved lives but ultimately became a source of contention and rebellion?

Please cut out this article and save it for your Friday Shabbat dinner discussion. For further discussions of Parshat Hashavua geared toward families, get on the web at www.jewishfamily.com "Portion of the Week" and www.uahc.org "Shabbat Table Talk". You may also want to try these two websites: http://learn.jtsa.edu/topics/parashah_archive.shtml and <http://www.torah.org>

Beth El Worship and Study Minyan

The Beth El Worship and Study Minyan will meet on Saturday, February 3 in the All Purpose Room from 9:50 am to noon. The service, conducted entirely by members of the Congregation, combines evocative Torah study with ample singing and ruach. Children of all ages are welcome, although the service is oriented towards adults. Contact Dan Hirsch, 301-654-7289, DOHirsch@aol.com; Sid Getz, 301-530-2215, Sidgetz@aol.com; or Mark Levitt, 301-365-5365, MKEMJ@aol.com, for more information.

Learners' Minyan

Our Learners' Minyan meets on the third Shabbat of the month through June, from 10 am to noon in the All Purpose Room. The date this month is February 17. The service, conducted by Rabbi Rudolph, is designed for the novice worshipper. It moves slowly. It is very hands-on in orientation, from how to put on the talit, to knowing when to bow, to practicing how to have an aliyah. There is also a focus each time on a different major portion of the service. Questions and discussions are very much encouraged. And it's fun! No registration or advance sign-up required. Contact Rabbi Rudolph, (301) 652-2606, ext. 318, for more information.

All in the Family

Mazal Tov to **Robert and Carole Kaminsky** on the engagement of their daughter, **Julie Beth Kaminsky**, to **Alan Gary Minsk**, son of **Donald and Sheila Minsk** of Atlanta, GA.

Mazal Tov to **Herb and Peggy Levinson** on the birth of their granddaughter, **Elyssa Danielle Garson**, on December 6, 2000. Elyssa is the daughter of **Michael and Lisa Garson**.

Congregation Beth El wishes a speedy recovery to **Murray Haber**.

Evening Minyan

The following people are asked to help us with our daily Evening Minyan for the next two weeks. On Sunday through Thursday, the Minyan begins at 8 p.m. and concludes at 8:15 pm During the week of your assignment, we would appreciate your attending as many evenings as possible, so that those who are saying Kaddish will have a minyan that they can attend at Beth El.

February 4 to February 8

Theodore Meltzer
Allan and Shereen Mendelowitz
Paul and Marcia Merlin
David and Carole Metzger
Roy Millenson
Daniel and Julie Miller
Frances Miller
Jay and Lillian Miller
Laura Miller
Lee Miller and Sheryl Rosensky Miller
Philip Miller
Mark Milner and Hattie Ulan
Max and Betty Milner
Harvey and Susan Mininberg
Jack and Johanna Minker
Allen and Sima Minton
Daniel Mintz and Ellen Elow-Mintz
Paul and Yvonne Mirengoff
Ira and Kristen Mirsky
Andrew Mitz and Carol Fried

February 11 to February 15

Jeffrey Moak and Karyl Barron
Greta Coen Moffatt and J. Curtis Moffatt
Debra Morgenstern
Jonathan Morgenstern
Michael and Keiko Morgenstern
Jonathan Morris
Jack and Annette Moshman
Daniel and Carol Moskowitz
Bernard and Toby Moss
Ida Moss
Michael and Judith Muntner
Barry Myers and Robin Gross
Louis and Faina Nagel
Edith Nash
Twila Nattel
Gary and Annick Nemirovsky
Irwin and Hellaine Nepo
Barry and Karen Neuman
Noam and Andrea Neusner
Robert and Beatrice Newell

Weekday Service Schedule

Morning Minyan

7:30 am Monday to Friday

9 am Sunday and Major Civic Holidays

Evening Minyan

8 pm Sunday to Thursday

Donations Accepted

USY will again be running a Silent Auction at this year's Purim Carnival (March 4). If you, or your business, would like to donate goods or services to be auctioned off, please return this form or call Ariele Hausner-Barach, Youth Director, at 301-652-2606 ext. 308.

**Suggestions for items include gift certificates, artwork, cooking a meal or dessert, babysitting, cleaning, lawn services, or time shares.



All proceeds benefit Tikun Olam, USY's National Tzedakah fund.

Date: _____

On behalf of the United Synagogue Youth of Congregation Beth El of Montgomery County, we donate for the auction, to be held on March 4, 2001, the following item/service:

Name of Establishment: _____

Contact: _____

Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

Item: _____

Value: _____

Authorized Signature: _____

Please respond by February 25, 2001.

Thank you!