

Scroll

CONGREGATION BETH EL

October 10, 2003

14 Tishrei 5764

Volume 53

No. 3

Inside

Sisterhood News	2
Men's Club News.....	3
President's Message	3
Splinters from the Board	4
Set the Table with Torah	8
Youth Department	14

Events

Flu Shot Clinic	2
Saul Bendit Institute	7
Sisterhood Membership Dinner	12
Mitzvah Day	12, 13
Roundtable with the Rabbi	16

Message from Rabbi Harris



I feel like I have been in synagogue a lot lately! We just finished Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and look forward to Sukkot (beginning the evening of Oct. 10), Hoshanah Rabbah (Oct. 17), Shemini Atzeret (Oct. 18), and Simchat Torah (Oct. 19). The tone of the High Holidays are solemn. Now, the tone shifts with the powerful and beautiful sensory experiences of the aroma of the *arbah me'neem* of Sukkot (the three types of branches from the willow, palm, and myrtle trees plus the citrus fruit or *etrog*), the beating of willows on Hoshanah Rabbah symbolizing the finality of God's decrees; and the dancing and celebration of Simchat Torah. The vibrancy of the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and fluid movements of these latter holidays contrast with the High Holidays.

Many have the custom of inviting *ushpizin* (guests) into their sukkah. As the sukkah is a symbol of God's sheltering protection over the Children of Israel, we invite in historic figures who also protected the Israelites. Our tradition invites Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, and David. Today, many women have been added to this exclusive "A-list" including Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Leah, Esther, Deborah, and Ruth.

The *mitzvah* of *hakhamasat orhim* (extending hospitality) also includes inviting new people in. With the inherent informality and fun of eating in a sukkah, it is a perfect way to get to know other people in our Beth El community. I want to

Continued on Page 3

Shabbat and Festival Services

Friday, October 10	10:30 am Jr. Congregation – APR
Erev Sukkot	10:30 am Gan Shabbat – MR
6:30 pm Friday Evening & Festival Service	7:30 pm Simchat Torah Festival Service
8:00 pm Family Shabbat Service – SH	Sunday, October 19
Saturday, October 11	Simchat Torah
1st Day Sukkot	9:15 am Festival Service
7:30 & 9:15 am Shabbat & Festival Service	Friday, October 24
10:00 am Jr. Congregation – Chapel	6:30 pm Friday Evening Service – APR
10:30 am Nitzanim – APR	Saturday, October 25
6:30 pm Festival Service	B'reishit: Genesis 1:1-6:8
Sunday, October 12	7:30 & 9:15 am Shabbat Services
2nd Day Sukkot	9:15 am Sarah Kramer Bat Mitzvah
9:15 am Festival Service	10:00 am Jr. Congregation – APR
9:15 am Day School Festival Service	10:30 am Nitzanim – BR
Friday, October 17	Friday, October 31
Hoshanah Rabbah	6:30 pm Friday Evening Service – BR
6:30 pm Friday Evening & Festival Service– APR	Saturday, November 1
Saturday, October 18	Noah: Genesis 6:9-11:32
Shemini Atzeret	7:30 & 9:15 am Shabbat Services
9:15 am Shabbat & Festival Service (Yizkor)	9:15 am Laura Levine Bat Mitzvah
9:30 am Minyan Chaverim – BR	9:50 am Worship & Study Minyan – BR
	10:00 am Jr. Congregation – APR
	10:30 am Gan Shabbat – MR
	11:00 am Shitufim – Rm. 209

Sisterhood News

Torah Fund Award to Janice Liebowitz

Sisterhood is pleased to announce that **Janice Liebowitz** is this year's recipient of the Torah Fund Award for service to Sisterhood. Janice has worked for many years on a variety of Sisterhood and congregation projects, and has had special interest in the areas of caring and social action. She was chair of the Book Group, and served as a member, then chair, of the Caring Committee. She served for five years as Sisterhood Vice President for Social Action, during which time she helped start the much-appreciated Shiva Meal program, which she continues to chair. Janice's beautiful and delicious home-baked challot are legendary, and for the past several years she has been a teacher at the Sisterhood Challah Baking Workshop. She has coordinated the baking of hamantaschen by Sisterhood members for use in shalach manot baskets on Purim for residents of the Hebrew Home.

As a long-time member and current chair of the Beth El Social Action Committee, Janice has been very involved with planning and participating in Mitzvah Day, including cooking for the Community Based Shelter, making treat bags for patients and siblings who are staying at the Children's Inn, and organizing the gleaning of local fields. She has directed the annual Mitzvah Day Variety Show, featuring Beth El youth, at the Hebrew Home, and she has organized holiday parties at the Home on Hanukkah and Tu B'Shvat. Janice was an active parent volunteer in the schools and currently teaches third grade in the Beth El Religious School.

Please join us when we present the Torah Fund Award to Janice Liebowitz at the annual Sisterhood Membership Dinner on October 30. See the dinner reservation form in this issue of the *Scroll*.

Remember to Join Sisterhood

It is not too late to become a member of Sisterhood. If you didn't send in your membership form with your High Holiday registration packet, just send a check now for \$36 (made out to Beth El Sisterhood) to the office. Please include a purple membership form, if you have one, but it is not required.

A one-year free membership is available to women who joined the congregation after March 1, 2003. Send a note or purple membership form indicating you wish to have the free membership. For more information contact Adeen Postar at 301-564-4516, postar1@aol.com, or Gale Dutcher at 301-984-0025, gad695@aol.com.

All Sisterhood members should see the Membership Dinner flyer in this edition of the *Scroll* and be sure to join us on October 30.

Invitations and Stationery

To order invitations and stationery, please call Sisterhood's volunteer rep. Marilyn Hammerman at 301-881-0011.

JCCGW Book Club

During 2003-2004, the Beth El Sisterhood invites members of the Beth El community to join the JCCGW Book Club, which is moderated by Jonina Duker. The group meets Sunday evening at 7:30 PM at the Barnes & Noble at Montrose Crossing.

The next 2 books are:

October 26 — *Constantine's Sword* by James Carroll

November 16 — *Days of Awe* by Achy Obeja

Sisterhood Judaica Shop

Visit our re-decorated shop
and see the new merchandise, including
many beautiful things from Israel.

Selected items are on sale.

Our new fall hours are
Wednesday and Thursday:

9 a.m. - Noon

Sunday:

9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Purchase all your High Holiday needs
and support Beth El

Beth El Sisterhood

and

Adventist HealthCare Community Health Program

will offer a

Flu Shot Clinic

Sunday, November 2, 2003

9 am - 12 noon

9 am - 10 am: seniors (65 & over) and people at risk

10 am - 12 noon: seniors, young & healthy adults

Where: Beth El Board Room
Walk-in, No Reservations Necessary

Who: Adults, 18 and Older
Members and Non-members
(must not be pregnant, allergic to eggs,
have a cold, or Guillain-Barre)

Cost: \$20 (cash or check)
Will Accept Medicare Part B (bring card)

Info: Call Pat Danoff at (301) 365-1180

Beat the Flu Bug

Message from Rabbi Harris continued

encourage you to take the opportunity to reach beyond your regular circle of friends and extend yourself to meet new people. Take the extra moment to introduce yourself to that familiar person but whose name you have forgotten. (In all likelihood, they have forgotten your's too.) Let us all set a tone for 5764 by opening our hearts, extending our hands, and strengthening our special community.

For more information on *ushpizin* see http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Sukkot/Overview_Sukkot_at_Home/Sukkah/Ushpizin_669.htm

Men's Club News

Men's club Sunday programs are somewhat limited at this time due to the number of Festivals that fall on Sunday this year. Two programs scheduled during this time are:

October 9: Men's Club will continue hosting Hearing Men's Voices at 8:15 p.m. This is a facilitated discussion program for men only that focuses on questions, concerns, and other items of significant interest for men. All are welcome, there is no need to attend every session, and there is no charge. The September meeting happened to be on the 11th and a good deal of discussion centered on the anniversary of 9/11/01.

October 26: "Its Academic" will be hosted at Beth El with visiting teams from Ohr Kodesh, Adas Israel, and Beth Sholom. Services will be at 8:30 a.m. (please note the time for Oct. 26 only), breakfast at 9:30 a.m. and the program will begin around 10:30 a.m.

Start thinking about making
your own Tallit.

Our award winning
Tallit Workshop will begin
in November.

Watch for details in future *Scrolls*

Message from the President

In stark contrast to the intentional fragility of the sukkah, our synagogue board is in very solid shape. In early September, a board retreat was held for the first time in more than six years, and I believe it was an outstanding success. For more than five hours, we spent time getting to know one another, discussing issues of Jewish and volunteer leadership, and preparing ourselves for what lies ahead. We were joined by **Rabbis Rudolph and Harris and Hazzan Lubin**. The talent, dedication, and ruach of our board members is exceptional, and I anticipate that they will be leading our congregation in a manner that will be exemplary. Special thanks to the retreat chair, **Suzanne Bronheim**, and committee members **Michael Feinstein, David Schultz, and Sheila Bellack**.

As the six operational Centers begin to organize themselves and develop their plans for the coming year, we will continue to update you on their progress. But even at this early time in the synagogue year, I can present a small sample of just some of their current goals:

The Center for Education and Lifelong Learning has created an Education Cabinet, consisting of Beth El's lay and professional education leaders, to foster coordination among educational programs, fill gaps among the offerings, and create the mechanism for guided individual learning.

The Center for Administration will be involved with developing plans to attract new members, seeking to create a helpful data base for the benefit of the other Centers, and minimizing disruptions from the construction project.

The Center for Finance and Development is planning to standardize more formally the budgetary and financial controls already in place and create an overall strategy for fundraising.

The Center for Community Building is exploring ideas for synagogue-wide events and ways to create more connections within our community.

The Center for Prayer and Spirituality has formed a new Worship Committee, which will study all of the

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services we currently offer, explore ideas for increasing accessibility and reach at our services, and create an opportunity for dialogue with the clergy.

The Center for Strategic Planning and Governance is attempting to standardize the work of the Nominating and Recruitment Committee from year to year and develop a coordinated method for timely and effective communication within the congregation.

As the year continues, our Center leaders (Vice Presidents) will be engaging their committee chairs, trustees, Atid Committee representatives, and experts from the congregation to address these and other areas raised by the Atid report. I look forward to reporting on their activities.

Wishing you a Chag Sameach,
Brent

Splinters from the Board Tuesday, August 26 Meeting

Construction Update: **Brent Berger** reported that the houses south of the shul will be demolished soon. This is a bit behind schedule; however, it shouldn't affect the timeline of the entire construction project. There was also discussion about the progress of the bank loan. **Sheila Bellack** informed us that the bank loan has yet to be negotiated, but a commitment letter was issued. The Board discussed the progress of the loan process and will follow-up with the Construction Committee.

Announcements: September 7 is the Board retreat. On September 14 at 7:00 p.m., the Jewish Federation is offering a leadership course held at Beth El and **Erica Brown** will be speaking. The Federation is also offering a Jewish Leadership Institute and is currently taking nominations. **Rabbi Rudolph** will be opening his home from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. Thursday August 28, for congregants to pay respects to Hazzan Abe and Sandy Lubin on the tragic loss of their granddaughter. Finally, thanks to all who helped with the Beth El Open House!

D'var Torah: End of the summer is a time of transition in both the secular and Jewish calendar. There has been an ancient debate about the beginning of the new year. There were two calendars in ancient times. Nisan (in the spring) is the beginning of the Jewish calendar year. However, Rosh Hashanah is the "head" of the year. In a way, we get the best of both worlds. **Rabbi Rudolph** looks forward to a great year and wishes the Board a year of peace and health.

Treasurer's Report: **Walter Arnheim** summarized the current finances of the shul. For the two months ending July 31, 2003, income has exceeded expenses

by \$240,204. Membership has a net gain of 7 units (17 joined and 10 left). School enrollment is lower than anticipated; the reasons for the lower enrollment vary from family to family. This could result in a shortfall of approximately \$20,000 and the situation is being monitored. Board members who wish further information or have questions may contact **Walter Arnheim** or **Sheila Bellack**.

Restricted Fund Proposal (See details on page 5): **Judy Futterman** summarized the proposed policy on restricted funds. Following discussion, the Board voted to change the proposed policy to state that all contributions be reported in the *Scroll*. The amendment to the policy passed with three oppositions and two abstentions.

The Board also discussed funds that reach certain dollar amounts (\$25,000). It was agreed that the Board, in addition to the Executive Director and Treasurer, recommend to the Support Foundation the possibility of any such funds being used to establish an endowment (for the same purpose).

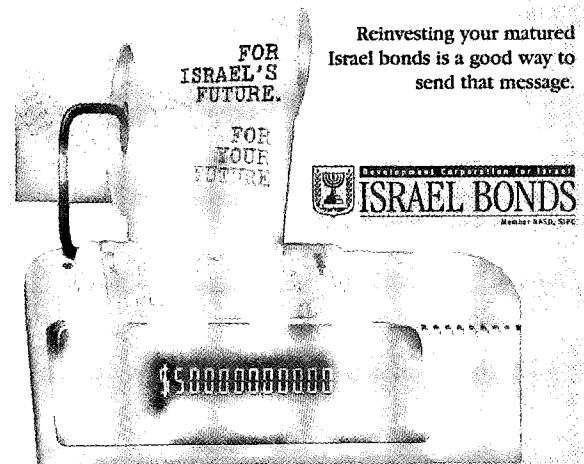
All the restricted funds follow approved and normal accounting procedures and are used only for the stated purpose of the fund. All expenses are reported. In addition, if a donation is given for an unreasonable purpose, such donation is rejected. The Board agreed on the importance of providing the financial details of Beth El to the congregation regularly.

**NEARLY \$500,000,000 IN STATE OF
ISRAEL BONDS HELD BY BONDHOLDERS
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WILL MATURE IN 2003.**

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New Policy Regarding Beth El Restricted Funds

At its August meeting, the Board of Directors adopted a new policy for administering Beth El's Restricted Funds, which are contributions made for specific ongoing purposes. This was the result of the work of the Policy Committee, under the chairmanship of Norman Eule, that reviewed procedures for Beth El's Restricted Funds - how they are established, minimum contribution levels, and other factors regarding their operation. The committee also compared Beth El's administration of its funds to that of several other local Jewish communal institutions.

The key components of this policy, which go into effect immediately (with the exception of item #2) are outlined below. Please feel free to contact Sheila Bellack if you have any questions.

1. A new restricted fund can be created to fulfill an ongoing need of the synagogue that cannot be met by any existing fund. A minimum of \$5,000 is necessary to start a fund.

2. While donations of any amount will still be accepted and appreciated, effective November 1, 2003, the minimum donation to a fund (or any other donation to Beth El) with an acknowledgement card will be \$18. Smaller contributions will continue to be acknowledged in the *Scroll*, but the actual cost of the full acknowledgement process is greater than the smaller donations.

3. Donations for JNF trees, chumashim and siddurim will be recognized with a certificate or bookplate for contributions that at least cover Beth El's costs for these items as noted on the donation envelope.

Through your generosity, Beth El is able to maintain many of our activities and programs. The Congregation depends on the support received from the Restricted Funds and we are most appreciative of the contributions from members and non-members alike. A list of Beth El's restricted funds is included below.

Elisabeth and Heinz Bauer Confirmation Fund: To defray the cost of the Confirmation Class trip to New York.

Saul Bendit Adult Institute Fund: To support the program of adult education courses offered by the Institute.

Beth El Forest: The Congregation has established a forest in the United Synagogue National Park, near Safad, Israel, in cooperation with the Jewish National Fund. Individual trees cost \$18.00 each.

Building Fund: To defray the mortgage and expenses related to the physical plant.

Cantor's Fund: To provide for a variety of musically

related materials and equipment for the enhancement of the musical and cultural programs of the Congregation.

Capital Campaign Fund: To support the costs of one-time renovations and construction.

Chevra Kadisha Fund: To defray the cost of needed ritual items and food for the Shiva house.

College Activities Fund: To provide for special mailings and programs for our college students.

Disabled Access Fund: Funds will be used to renovate the synagogue so that the disabled can participate more fully in services.

Fine Arts Fund: To help beautify the interior of the building.

General Fund: To provide funds for the special needs of the Congregation.

Noe Groner Camp Ramah Scholarship Fund: To encourage our young children to attend a Jewish summer camp.

Beth El Israel Emergency Fund: To help support a family that is a victim of terror in Israel and for Magen David Adom.

Israel Experience Teen Fund: To supply partial scholarships for high school students pursuing a semester or summer in an educational program in Israel.

Estelle Kimball Nursery School Fund: To benefit the secular and Judaic education curriculum of the nursery school.

Bernardo Kotelanski, M.D., Marriage Education Fund: To provide for a pre-marital education program at Beth El.

Library Fund: To purchase books for our library. Book plates are inscribed with names of those being honored or memorialized.

Masorti: Funds are used to benefit and promote Conservative Judaism in Israel.

Mazon: A Jewish response to hunger.

Men's Club Perspectives Fund: To support the "Perspectives in Dialogue" series.

Elsie Mintz Landscaping Fund: To add to the beauty of the synagogue grounds.

Morning Minyan Fund: For charity within and outside Beth El and to help defray the cost of breakfasts following the morning minyan and the Shabbat early morning service.

Music Fund: To provide for musical evenings, musical equipment and supplies.

Nitzanim Fund: For activities of families with younger children.

Vince Prada Technology Fund: To support our programmatic and administrative technological needs.

Prayerbook Fund: To purchase prayerbooks and Bibles. For inscriptions with the names of those being honored or memorialized, a contribution of \$20.00 is required for each prayerbook and \$55.00 for each Bible.

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund: Funds are disbursed

by the rabbis, at their discretion, for charitable, religious or educational organizations, individuals with special needs, special projects at the rabbi's or donor's direction, and professional or educational needs.

School Enrichment Fund: For additional experiences, material, and equipment to enhance the religious school curriculum.

Social Action Fund: Funds are disbursed by the Social Action Committee to various charitable institutions.

Sybil Suls Youth Activities Fund: To supplement the activities of our youth program and provide subsidies to members of U.S.Y. and Kadima to attend regional conventions.

Torah Scroll Fund: For the repair and maintenance of our Torah scrolls and for the purchase of silver ornaments.

Vatikkim: To provide activities for our retired persons group, which meets for social and study purposes every Thursday.

World Jewry Fund - Kostroma: To respond to needs of a reviving Jewish community, Kostroma, in the former Soviet Union.

World Jewry Fund - Bahia Blanca: To help our sister community in Argentina through its present economic crisis.

Leila Rosen Young Equality Fund: To support activities and projects that further the equal participation of all segments (such as women, singles, the handicapped, etc.) in the life of this Congregation and the Jewish community at large.

New Restricted Fund Established in Memory of Vince Prada

The Singer-Prada family has recently established the Vince Prada Technology Fund at Beth El, in memory of Vince who died suddenly in July 2002. Technology was one of Vince's many interests, and the fund will be used to further both the programmatic and administrative technological needs of the congregation, whether it be in the new library, our various educational activities, administrative offices, or elsewhere within our synagogue where a need is identified. Contributions made to date in memory of Vince Prada will be included in this fund. Congregation Beth El extends its sincerest thanks to the Singer-Prada family for remembering Vince in this way and for helping to fill an important need within our synagogue.

All in the Family

Mazal Tov to **Howie and Holly Stein** on the birth of their grandson, **Matthew Owen Stein**, born on August 20, 2003 in New Jersey. Parents are **Andrew and Nancy Stein**.

Mazal Tov to **Suzin Glickman**, Upper School teacher, and **Joshua Bobeck**, on the birth of **Abbie Bobeck**, born June 18, 2003. She joins Aaron and Ben Moc.

Mazal Tov to **Nick Heffter** on the birth of his 9th grandchild, **Cyma Murphy Berk**, born September 19, 2003 in New York City. Parents are **Lisa and Edward Berk**.

Mazal Tov to **Rosita Kotelanski** on the birth of her grandson, **Daniel Kotelaski**, on September 15, 2003. Parents are **Marina Feldman and Jorge Kotelanski**. He join big sister, **Maia Kotelanski**.



Simchat Torah

**Saturday, October 18,
at 7:30 p.m.**

**Please join us for a joyous
Simchat Torah Celebration.**

**After the brief evening service, Shir Atid,
our Children's Choir,
will perform,
followed by joyous
dancing and music
led by Hazzan Lubin and
Beth El's musicians.**

Lunch in the Sukkah

**The clergy invite you to have
lunch in the Sukkah**



**October 14, 2003
Noon to 1:00 p.m.**



**Bring a dairy brown bag lunch,
drinks provided**

SAUL BENDIT ADULT INSTITUTE

FALL 2003

Six Wednesday Evenings, October 15, 22, and 29; November 5, 12, and 19

7:30 to 8:20 p.m.

- Psalms: A Writer's Workshop Rabbi Gregory Harris and Paola Samakovlija-Bolasny
 Great Hazzanim of the 20th Century Hazzan Abraham Lubin
 Jewish Best Sellers, 2002-03 Rabbi Samuel Scolnic
 Privileged Jews in a Hostile Environment:
 The "Court Jews" from the Middle Ages to the Industrial Age Jeffrey Kaplan
 Witnesses to History: The Holocaust and the Establishment of Israel Tamar Fishman,
 Elaine and Daniel Mann, Rita Rubinstein, Alfred Traum, Herman Taube, and Yoram Bar-Noy
 Hebrew Prayerbook Reading for the Shabbat Morning Service Cheryl Kreiser

8:20 to 8:40 p.m. - Coffee Break

8:40 to 9:30 p.m.

- The Afterlife in Western Religious Tradition Rabbi William D. Rudolph and Guests
 Judaism, Israel and the Environment Rabbi Fred Scherlinder Dobb, Abraham Silver,
 Ilana Preuss, Joseph Greenblott, Karen Hudes, and Barry Elman
 The First Century: Rabbi Akiva and the Great Reconstructionists Dr. Saul Rogolsky
 The American Jewish Merchant, Part III Douglas Bregman
 Sukkot: The Quintessential Fall Holiday Jonina Duker

SPECIAL FEATURE: TUESDAY EVENING CLASS (7:30-9:00 p.m., on Oct. 21, 28; Nov. 4 and 11)

- Ceramics for the Jewish Holidays Yonina Blech-Hermoni
 Class will be at the instructor's Rockville home; directions provided after registration

Six Tuesday Mornings, October 14, 21, and 28; November 4, 11, and 18

8:10 to 9:00 a.m.

- A Taste of Talmud (No fee) Rabbi Samuel Scolnic

9:00 to 9:55 a.m.

- Reading Hebrew with Ease for Emerging Readers Betsy Roth

10:00 to 10:50 a.m.

- The Afterlife in Western Religious Tradition Rabbi William D. Rudolph and Guests
 Jewish Best Sellers, 2002-03 Rabbi Samuel Scolnic

10:50 to 11:10 a.m. - Coffee Break

11:10 to Noon

- Great Hazzanim of the 20th Century Hazzan Abraham Lubin
 Jewish Women Making a Difference, Part III Mollie Berch

TWO-HOUR CLASS 10:00am TO NOON

- Koshering the Classics Joan Platt Simon

NEW FEATURE: OFFSITE THURSDAY CLASS (8:30-9:30 a.m., on Oct. 23, 30; Nov. 6, 13, and 20)

at Panera's Restaurant, 1776 E. Jefferson Street, Rockville

- Stories from Genesis (No fee) Rabbi Gregory Harris

BROCHURES ARE NOW AVAILABLE

Note: The evening minyan will start at 8:20 p.m. (rather than 8:00 p.m.) on evenings when Institute classes are scheduled. Questions? Call 301-652-2606, Ext. 349.

Congregation Beth El of Montgomery County, 8215 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda, MD 20814-1451

Please enroll me in the following A.M. P.M. course(s):

1. _____ 2. _____

Enclosed is a check for \$ _____ made payable to Beth El.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Phone _____

One 1-hour course (Six 1-hour sessions) (Talmud; Stories from Genesis - no fee) \$30/member; \$35/nonmember

Koshering the Classics (Six 2-hour sessions; incl \$20 ingredients fee) \$80/member; \$90/nonmember

Ceramics for the Jewish Holidays (Four 90-minute sessions; incl \$36 materials fee) \$66/member; \$71/nonmember

Set the Table with Torah

October 11: Sukkot - VaYikra; Maftir: BaMidbar

On Sukkot we read the laws concerning the building and dwelling in the sukkah; it's sort of an owner's manual. Included as well is the list of the particular sacrifices offered at the time of the Festival.

I have a particularly favorite midrash about Sukkot which I would like to share with you. What distinguishes this holiday from all of our others is the usage of the "arba minim"—the four species of plantlife, each of which represents a different aspect of the Fall harvest festival. Each part of the lulav and the etrog also corresponds to a part of our body. There is yet one more explanation of the four species, especially for you cinema aficionados. There is a direct correlation between Sukkot and The Wizard of Oz!

The myrtle leaves (*haddas* in Hebrew) most resemble our eyes. Towards the end of the movie, each of our FOUR heroes requests something from the Wizard. The scarecrow, stuffed only with hay, wanted a brain, and our eyes are the gateway to our brains. The *etrog*, the yellow citron, most resembles the human heart; we needn't go any further to remember the tin man's request! Burt Lahr's memorable cowardly lion only wanted his elusive courage, and not to be spineless anymore. He wanted to stand straight and tall, and thus is most like the *lulav*—the palm frond that is compared to a spine. The last part, the willow or *arava*, looks most like our lips with which we speak, therefore bringing into the fray the wizard; he became the Wizard of Oz by using words and pronouncing judgements verbally (and loudly!).

The only one left is Dorothy (all right, and Toto, too...), who only wanted one thing: to go home. The sukkah is our home for the eight days—it's flimsy and could easily blow away during a strong wind, or even a tornado on the Kansas prairie. But like in the movie, it serves as a shelter and is secure and strong and protects us from the elements (and mean ol' witches!).

As we eat in our sukkot this year, and as we bless our lulavim, let each of us wish for special things during the coming year, and hopefully our dreams, like Dorothy's, will come true.

October 17: Sh'mini Atzeret - D'varim; Maftir, BaMidbar

The end of the High Holiday season brings a combination of relief and sadness. We can finally resume our normal, albeit hectic, lives and get on with the year (and Sunday School!). There are no more huge, festive meals to prepare, no more extra services to attend and no more annual things to build, purchase or use. At the same time, though, by returning to our daily grind, we bid farewell to such a special time of the Jewish year—the old familiar melodies from our

childhood, the smells and tastes of foods we only have at this time, the fingers sticky with honey, and hopefully the closeness we feel to our traditions, our liturgy and our G-d.

We must make a strong effort, upon "re-entry", to retain just a bit of the higher levels of spirituality which we each have hopefully attained during the past month or so. Even a small "left-over" will need to carry us through the next several months, till we return to this most special place at the end of the month of Elul 5764.

October 25: B'reishit

Writing about the creation story is, in many ways, both a blessing and a curse! There are, on the one hand, so many popular stories and images to relate, it is so difficult to choose which is more important or significant than any other. I would like to relate one midrash which I learned while attending the CAJE conference this past summer. The question presented was why Cain was jealous of his brother Abel. We read that each brought an offering and that whereas Cain didn't appear to have given it much thought, Abel brought "the best of his fruits." It is the assumption then that G-d "appreciated" the extra efforts of Abel. Upon further reading, though, we find something else. In Genesis 4:1, we read, "And (Eve) conceived and gave birth to Cain. And she said, 'I have gained a male child with the help of the L-rd'" Verse 2 goes on stating, "(Eve) then gave birth to Abel." We often think of Abel being the favored, younger child, whom Cain felt he had to always compete with; losing that favoritism contest with G-d that sent him over the edge when he killed Abel. But after reading these two verses, we see that Abel was probably the more competitive, living in the shadow of his brother who was born "with the help of G-d". How do you compete with G-d's blessing? Like Avis, Abel felt the need to try harder and compete for attention and first-place. He was just "conceived and born," according to the text. He lived his life trying to add G-d's blessing to his legacy as well. There is much wisdom in the stories of family travail and disagreements in the *Tanach*, and hopefully they come to teach us how to avoid the same pitfalls with our own families today.

Baruch Dayan Emet

Congregation Beth El offers its sincere condolences to **Ronald Treinish** on the death of his wife, **Evelyn Treinish**; to **Martin and Kitty Strauss** on the death of their daughter and **Steven Strauss** on the death of his sister, **Evie Strauss**; to **Jon Simon** on the death of his mother **Rita Gloria Simon**; to **Barbara Shapiro** on the death of her mother, **Helen Lucy Susser**; and to **Carole Kaminsky** on the death of her husband, **Robert Kaminsky**.

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