



Scroll

CONGREGATION BETH EL

Message from the Rabbi



A few weeks ago I got an email from a couple I didn't know. It was very brief: "Dear Rabbi Rudolph— Just to let you know that your congregants ..., heeding your exhortations to offer hospitality, were our gracious hosts last evening for a lovely Shabbat seder. Signed...."

When I spoke on the second day of Rosh Hashanah about the mitzvah of *hachnasat orchim*, hospitality, I was hopeful that my words would touch a nerve. The message was simple – in our own homes on Friday nights and in our synagogue home on Shabbat mornings, let's be more welcoming, reaching out more to friends and to guests, sharing with them the joys of Shabbat and the warmth of our community. The message was simple, and I was optimistic that it would be embraced. I wasn't prepared for how deeply it would be embraced. I wasn't prepared, in my wildest of dreams, for how many of you would happily share with me stories of your most recent Shabbat dinner and who you invited, and how much fun it was, and how many recipes you used from the Sisterhood Cookbook, and how many would then thank me for reminding you of this wonderful mitzvah. While I was also hopeful that I would see more of a conscious effort to greet strangers and guests at the Shabbat morning Kiddush and other times, I wasn't prepared for the quantum leap forward in that regard that I would see as well.

The job of a rabbi is, in a real way, quite simple. It's to remind you of what you already know to do but, for whatever reason, have not made that action a priority. *Hachnasat orchim* is not rocket science. It's a mitzvah that is easy to

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Shabbat Services

Friday, January 23

6:30 pm Friday Evening Service-APR

Saturday, January 24

Va-era: Exodus 6:2-9:35

7:30 & 9:15 am Shabbat Services

9:15 am Joshua Schwaber Bar Mitzvah

10:00 am Jr. Congregation-BR

10:30 am Nitzanim-APR

Friday, January 30

6:30 pm Friday Evening Service-BR

8:00 pm Family Shabbat Service-SH

Saturday, January 31

Bo: Exodus 10:1-13:16

7:30 & 9:15 am Shabbat Services

9:15 am Melissa Zissman Bat Mitzvah

10:00 am Jr. Congregation-BR

10:30 am Nitzanim-APR

11:00 am USY Service-Rm. 209

Friday, February 6

6:30 pm Friday Evening Service-APR

Saturday, February 7

Tu B'Shevat

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

7:30 & 9:15 am Shabbat Services

9:15 am Daniel Cohen Bar Mitzvah

9:50 am Worship & Study Minyan-APR

10:00 am Jr. Congregation-BR

10:30 am Gan Shabbat-MR

11:00 am Shitufim-Rm. 209

Friday, February 13

6:30 pm Friday Evening Service-APR

Saturday, February 14

Yitro: Exodus 18:1-20:23

7:30 & 9:15 am Shabbat Services

9:15 am Zoe Kershner Bat Mitzvah

10:00 am Learners Minyan-MR

10:00 am Jr. Congregation-BR

10:30 am Nitzanim-APR

5:00 pm Mincha, Seudah Shlishit,

Maariv, Havdalah-APR

Sisterhood News

Sisterhood Makes a Difference

Amidst the rush of the holiday season, Sisterhood members made time in their hectic schedules to support the fundraising efforts of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. On Wednesday, December 10, we gathered at Montgomery Mall to wrap shoppers' gifts for JDRF. We had some very talented wrappers! All customers were happy!

This year, with our help, the JDRF effort at Montgomery Mall raised over \$50,000. We would like to thank **Mimi Tygier** for suggesting and coordinating the project.

A big Todah Rabah to the following wrappers: **Margaret Cohen, Pat Danoff, Leslie Dellon, Barbara Eisenstein, Dale Gold, Emily Goldman, Judy Goldman, Marilyn Hammerman, Rita Kahn, Susan King, Karen Lipkind, Andrea Rivkin, Toby Rodman, Leslie Shedlin, Wendy Susswein, Suzanne Strauss, and Mimi Tygier.**

Judaica Shop

The Judaica Shop is closed during January for inventory and restocking. Marcia Kalman can still assist you with your shopping needs if you call her at 301-897-8572. We reopen in February, so please stop by to see what's new.

קשר נשים

Kesher Nashim

Who are we?

We are a Beth El Sisterhood group which offers support to Beth El women newly diagnosed with cancer by pairing them with Beth El cancer survivors and resources. We encourage any women who are cancer survivors to join our group.

Do you need to be a member of Sisterhood?

No, you just need to be a member of Beth El.

Why do we call ourselves Kesher Nashim?

Kesher Nashim means "connecting women." We chose this name because we hope to establish connections between women newly diagnosed with cancer and those in our group who have gone through similar experiences.

How do you contact us?

Call Margie London (301) 718-1712 or Susan King (301) 652-7350 and they will connect you with a member of our group.

Sisterhood

Miriam's Cup Workshop



Thursday, February 19
7:30 pm

Make a hand-painted glass
Miriam's cup for your Seder table
Cost \$10



Open to women, men, and youth (13 & up)
Return the form below by February 12
Call Annette Abrams (301-652-0214)
for information

Miriam's Cup Workshop

Name(s) _____

Phone _____

Check Amount _____
(payable to Beth El Sisterhood)

Mail by February 12 to: Annette Abrams
7803 Stratford Road
Bethesda, MD 20814

SISTERHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Zen of Mental Health Repair and Maintenance

**Reduce Your Stress —
Improve Your Health with Yoga**

Esther Geiger, Long Time Yoga Instructor at Unity
Woods Yoga Center, the Area's Largest
Professional Yoga Studio

Dress for light exercise

**Sunday, January 25
9:30-11:30 a.m.**

Men's Club News

The Men's Club sponsors a number of programs. Every Sunday morning (except religious holidays), the Men's Club sponsors the minyan, followed by a lox and bagels breakfast, then followed (generally) by a speaker. The minyan begins at 9:00 a.m., breakfast is at 9:30 a.m., with the program at 10 a.m. Our schedule for the next few weeks is:

Sunday, January 25: "Counting American Jews: "A Sure Guide to Becoming Perplexed," Sid Groeneman, PhD.

Sunday, February 1: Beth El joins with synagogues around the world in the World Wide Wrap. Program begins at 8:45 a.m. with mentors working with anyone who wants to learn how to put on Tefillin. (See page 5.)

Sunday, February 8: "Hollywood Stories," Shelby Reyes, Hollywood Cinematographer.

Thursday, February 12: Hearing Men's Voices - a continuing monthly meeting for men only to discuss subjects of common interest. This month, Rabbi Harris will continue the discussion on Ethical Wills. All men are welcome to attend whether they have attended before or not.

Saturday, February 14: 4:30 p.m. - Monthly Shabbat Evening Services -Mincha, Seudah Shlishit, Maariv, Havdalah.

Sunday, February 15: This will be the 2nd "Perspectives in Dialogue," a series of in-depth presentations by noted speakers: "Over 50 is not What it Used to be - New Paradigms," Dr. Doree Lynn, noted psychologist.

Message from the Rabbi *continued*

do and brings ample rewards on so many levels. Individually, and as a community, we have embraced this mitzvah in a powerful way. I trust we will continue to do so. Shabbat Shalom at Home is February 6. I hope every congregant will be hosting, or invited to, a Shabbat dinner. Let me or Sarah Roark know if you need a place at someone's table. And keep letting me know how this wonderful mitzvah is working itself out in your lives.

Rabbi Bill Rudolph

Staff Comings And Goings

Carole Wellner, who served as the Rabbis' Secretary for almost six years, left Beth El at the end of December 2003. A new position has been created - Program Administrator - which will better serve the current and future needs of our rabbis. Several good resumes have been received and we hope to select the successful candidate in the near future.

Hien Thanh, who has served as our Building Maintenance Supervisor for 20 years, is still unable to return to work due to illness. In order to respond to the many facility needs, we have contracted with PMM, our custodial service, to provide us with a Maintenance Supervisor. **Juan Gonzalez** began work at Beth El on January 7 and we look forward to a successful relationship. Prior to coming here, he held a similar position at the Bindeman Center, part of Washington Hebrew Congregation, in Potomac. Juan is working Wednesdays through Sundays, so that he can be present on our two busiest days. All of our other custodians - **Karl Smart, Angel Rodriguez, and Gonzalo Garcia** - will continue working here as well. Please extend a friendly greeting when you see Juan in the building.

Mazel Tov to the Beth El Graduates of the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School

Jonathan Fluger
Jason Gutman
David Scavo
Sarah Steward

We are all proud of your accomplishments.

Save The Date

Mark your calendars now for Saturday evening, May 8, 2004, when we honor Rabbi Rudolph for his twenty years of dedicated service to Beth El. This will be a night to remember - don't miss it!

BETH EL SCROLL

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Set the Table with Torah

by Louis Nagel

January 24: Va-era

In this portion Moses is given his mission to lead the Israelite people out of slavery. The Almighty so elevates Moses' role that the narrative states, "I place you in the role of God to Pharaoh, with your brother Aaron as your prophet" (Shemot 7:1). The phrase "Let my people go" is in this parsha along with Moses' "I am a man of impeded speech" and Pharaoh's "hardened heart." We have Moses' confrontations with Pharaoh and the first seven plagues.

By the time Moses went back to Egypt, the Israelites "spirits (had been) crushed by cruel bondage" (Shemot 6:9). This story has been a source of inspiration to numerous movements of national liberation such as blacks in the American south, natives of South Africa, and Jews in the Soviet Union. In all of these cases the condition that brought about an end to injustice was outside intervention, Moses backed up by an unstoppable force.

Look at the everyday and the grandiose injustices we and others suffer, from the bully on the block, the over-controlling supervisor to the out-of-control local or national leader. Where can we find the parallels to Moses and Aaron, the human wielding almighty power and the prophet? When is it enough to simply demand justice and what plagues can we call on to bring it about? When do we act on opportunities to play the role of pursuer of justice? These narratives are regular reminders of our role in the world to complete the ongoing act of creation, to bring about tikkun olam. Later in the Torah we are told specifically, "Justice, justice you shall pursue."

January 31: Bo

In this parsha we have the last three plagues, Pharaoh's continued obstinance, the Israelites being told to leave Egypt, "Go..begone," and Pharaoh once again changing his mind. We are also given rules for commemorating this event as a seven-day "Feast of Unleavened Bread" and that you shall "explain to your (child) on that day, It is because of what the Lord did for me when I went free from Egypt."

Egypt can be seen as the Jewish people's first exile from the "Promised Land," a 430 year period. Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to bring back food. As the narrative played out, the whole family left Canaan, a tale recounted in the last chapters of Bereshit and the story of Joseph. The Torah does not relate what happened after the famine ended, which was in Joseph's lifetime, other than the obvious, that the Israelites did not return to their land. It was a self-imposed exile, perhaps comparable to world Jewry that largely did not make aliyah either after World War I when, for a time, the Balfour Declaration enabled unlimited Jewish settlement or after 1948 when the State of Israel came into being.

In the tradition of Bibliodrama, carry out a dialogue

among Jacob's family at the end of the seven years of famine, when crops resumed more normal cycles of growth. Play the role of Jacob, his children, their wives, and grandchildren. Talk about going back to Canaan or staying in Egypt.

As a second Bibliodrama exercise, try improvising the dialogue after the tenth plague between Moses and the messenger summoning him in the middle of the night to Pharaoh's palace and the conversation between Moses and Aaron on the way to see Pharaoh.

February 7: B'shallah

We recently celebrated the centennial of flight. On an almost daily basis, we read news reports of medical breakthroughs and new discoveries in deep space. Although our rapidly expanding technological prowess might be expected to captivate the most attention, the news stories tend to focus on people's propensity for predictable or unpredictable behavior. That is, our greatest fascination is with human behavior.

Looking at Parshat B'shallah, I wonder if human nature changed in any essential way since ancient times. Moses leads the Israelites to freedom and still they grumble and complain constantly. God pulls off a few major miracles and a few days later they are waxing nostalgic for the good old days as slaves in Egypt. The Almighty passes on a few basic rules and the Israelites break them.

Lets get a jump on Pesach when we are supposed to retell the story of the Exodus as if we were there, using Bibliodrama, a midrash making experience filling in the blanks on Torah text.

Pick up the dialogue from here: You think disaster looms in the form of an oncoming Egyptian army. You've just said, "it is better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness" and then the Red Sea parts, opening up an escape route. What are the next words out of your mouth? What is your conversation walking through the Red Sea, walls of water to your left and right?

Manna appeared every day. Moses said, collect enough on Friday for Shabbat because Shabbat is a day of rest. "Yet some people went out on the seventh day to gather." Look out the window and imagine seeing your neighbors heading out to the fields on that Shabbat. Have a conversation about that family about what you are witnessing.

Moses is clearly distressed by the Israelites angry rebelliousness. Aaron is famously a peacemaker. Miriam is described as righteous and the women look up to her. What would a conversation between them be like regarding the Israelites slave mentality, nostalgia for slavery in Egypt, or their constant complaining?

Reflect on these dialogues, what do they tell us about human nature? Could your conversations have just as easily taken place slightly over 3,000 years ago?

Let's get wrapped up and be counted
At Sunday morning minyanim around the world.



Pledge you'll be there to
celebrate the Mitzvah of Tefillin.

www.worldwidewrap.org



**Join Beth El in the Fourth International
World Wide Wrap event,
Sunday, February 1, 2004,
8:45 to 11:00 am.**

Synagogues all over the world will celebrate the Mitzvah of Tefillin as a spiritual enhancement to davening. Extra sets of tefillin and personal trainers to help you put on tefillin will be available. Shacharit service will be followed by breakfast and a short educational program.

This is a free program sponsored by the Men's Club in conjunction with the International Federation of Men's Clubs.

Register with
Jeff Moak at jeffreymoak@msn.com or
301-320-9476,
or Howard Hoffman at
howardjhoffman@msn.com or
301-493-9109.

Interested In Joining/Forming A Havurah?

Are you new to Beth El? Have you been around awhile and want to connect more with members at the same stage of life or with the same interests? Joining a havurah might be the answer. Current havurot at Beth El have been together from 2 to 20 years and more! Members will tell you that their personal/family lives as well as their involvement at Beth El have been enriched as a result of their havurah participation.

We are now looking to form new havurot composed of members with common interests (examples: young families or families with young or religious school age kids, hiking, biking, photography, empty-nesters, or cooking - you name it). Let us know of your interest and we will try to match you with other members.

For more information or to let us know of your interest, contact Ann and Larry Kaplan at havurah@bethelmc.org.

Jewish and Christian Clergy at Beth El

Beth El will host a day of learning for Christian and Jewish clergy from around the region on February 11, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Sponsored by the Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies (ICJS), the conference is designed to bring clergy together to gain a deeper appreciation for the others tradition and value the difference or uniqueness of each. The topic of study for the day will be "Christian and Jewish Views of Sin and Atonement." We are proud to support this effort through hosting this conference. For more information, contact Rabbi Harris or learn more about ICJS at their web site www.icjs.org.

With Limited Parking, Why Not Carpool To Beth El?

Attending services, a class, or other program at Beth El? We know it's more difficult to find a parking space now that a portion of the parking lot is unavailable due to construction. So why not arrange to carpool with others? The Beth El office can create a listing of all our members by zip code and you are welcome to use this information. Please call Pam Kocher in the office, 301-652-8569, ext. 303, and she will be able to assist you with your request.

Beth El Cemetery Section At Judean Gardens

Cemetery sites are currently available in the Beth El section at Judean Gardens in Olney for \$1,250 each. Please contact Sheila Bellack at 301-652-8569, ext. 306, for further information.

Not Just on Mitzvah Day – As It Should Be

By Sarah Roark

Sunday, December 21, 2003 was a remarkable day for Social Action at Beth El. Sheldon Novek's seventh graders were busy making bagged lunches with supplies contributed by their families for the first day of our week at the Community-Based Shelter (CBS). At the same time, the **Rehns-Arnheim Family** was signing up for the last spot available on the chart prepared by Social Action Chair **Janice Liebowitz** for our week of meal service. In the rotunda USYers **Amanda Rudman** and **Kara Landsman** were selling bagels to benefit their Tikkun Olam fund. Across the lobby, **Michelle Lieban Levine**, **Abbie Eckland**, and **Dorene Rosenthal**, volunteers from the Family Education Advisory Committee, were busily filling out gift cards for people's contributions to the five local, national, and international organizations served by the Mitzvah Mall.

In the Social Hall and Sanctuary, the **Cohen Family** was celebrating their son Josh becoming a bar mitzvah. Food left over from the reception was taken to CBS. In a booklet about his day, Josh wrote that he was on his way to Israel bearing gifts for victims of terror who were rehabilitating in Hadassah Hospital. Josh is helped in this mitzvah effort by Operation Embrace, the same organization that we've partnered with to distribute the "peace quilts." The peace quilts, designed by **Amanda Ford**, will be composed of squares decorated at the Salute to Israel Weekend and sewn by a group of our Upper School students over January Intersession. Just the week before, Josh and his mother, **Debbie Friedman**, had taken the funds raised by the seventh grade leaf-raking project to purchase new warm winter coats for children residing at the National Center for Families and Children. My own children came to drop off the coats and were overwhelmed by the effusive appreciation expressed by the recipients.

On Friday, **Wynne Sitrin**, BENS Social Action parent, conveyed the toy donations that had been dropped off in the school hallway to the National Center for Families and Children. There was mild concern that the donations had been mixed up with the on-going toy drive for the Religious School. But by Sunday the hall was full again with new toys families generously contributed to the Interfaith Clothing Shelter.

Sunday afternoon found twelve ninth graders with three parents and one tenth grade family with **Louis Nagel** conducting a Hanukkah Party at the Jewish Foundation for Group Homes (JFGH) Bender residence in Rockville. The relationship with JFGH has been cultivated over many years. Back in October,

other ninth graders built a sukkah at a residence in Silver Spring. At four-thirty, I dropped off supplies at Our Lady Of Lourdes-Bethesda Cares soup kitchen, where eighth graders **Michael Groeneman**, **Michael Gross**, **Aaron Schulman**, and **Adam Marshall** were chaperoned by father **Sid Groeneman** as they made 40 lunches for the clients of this dinner program to take with them. Assorted eighth graders make lunches at the church twice a month and conduct Shabbat services at Maplewood Senior Residence once a month.

Reflecting on all the motivated people, all the organizations served, and all the lives touched on just one day out of the year made me feel great pride at being a member of this community. I am sure that there were other members quietly making shivah calls and preparing meals for the sick. This was not a special day, not "Mitzvah Day," but just a regular day full of mitzvot, as it should be.

Save the date



March 21, 2004



Sisterhood's Women's Seder

The 2004 Sisterhood
Women's Seder
will be held on
Sunday evening, March 21

Please save the date.

We promise a
sensory feast of ritual,
creativity, and food!

Details about time and price and
reservations will be coming soon.

Stay tuned.

Narkis Luvtin Sends Thanks For Hanukkah Gift

The following letter to the entire Beth El congregation was received by Ina Young. Beth El has contributed toward Narkis Luvtin's continuing education toward a Bachelor's degree in business administration. Also, for Hanukkah, Beth El sent "Hanukkah gelt" so Narkis could buy warm winter clothes for her year-old twins, Shir and Or, whose father was killed (before their birth) in a terrorist attack in Israel. Hal Scheinberg translated Narkis' letter from the Hebrew.

"December 11, 2003

Hi, I hope you're doing well. I wanted to update you to tell you that I received the money you sent us for Hanukkah and also to thank you from all of my heart for your generosity.

Our routine is working as it's supposed to. The kids go to day-care in the mornings and I go to classes. At present, we're starting the end-of-semester period and I'm a little stressed because of exams and projects that are due. I hope I get through these successfully.

I've met some wonderful students at the university. We work together and help each other. Some projects are individual and others we work in teams.

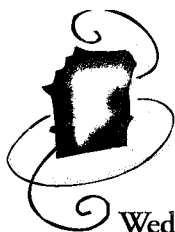
The kids are doing well and enjoy day-care (Gan). Next week, we have a Hanukkah party, and God willing, we will take pictures of the kids at the party and send them to you.

I'll be happy to hear from you soon.

Warm hugs and kisses to you all.

Narkis"

Please join us for



**Roundtable
with the
Rabbi**



Wednesday, February 4, 2004
2 p.m.

Board Room

Come help us celebrate the February birthdays.

We will have dessert and coffee with a roundtable discussion led by Rabbi Rudolph.

If you have questions, need transportation, or plan to attend, please call Rabbi Rudolph at 301-652-8573 ext 318.

Wine Wine Wine

*** GOURMET ***

Israeli kosher wines
for Passover
& all Beth El events

Learn, Taste, & Order from
Expert Lecturer
following Havdalah service

March 13, 2004 evening

SAVE THIS DATE!

more information
& registration in January



Friday, February 6, 2004

9:15 a.m. - Noon

in the Beth El Kitchen
sponsored by Sisterhood



**Challah Baking
Workshop**



Learn to prepare Challah and design your own challah cover. Take home what you make to enhance your celebration of Shabbat Shalom at Home.

R.S.V.P. to Glenda Koby at 301-718-9464
or gjkoby@yahoo.com

R.S.V.P. form for Challah Baking Workshop

Please tear off and return to the Sisterhood mailbox in the Office.

Name _____

Phone _____

Congregation Beth El Goes to the Negev

The following article by congregant **Sheldon London** appeared in the Washington Jewish Week:

The remarkable David Ben-Gurion, the architect of Israel's independence, was the inspiration for our seven-day mission to Israel.

We designed a trip to emphasize Ben-Gurion's dream of making the Negev the center of Israel's strong and independent future. To accomplish this objective, we took a road less traveled. Our guide, Avi Ben Joseph, admitted to us that in all his years of leading groups, none had planned so much time in Beersheva.

Why the Negev? It has more than 60 percent of the land mass of Israel and only 8 percent of its population. It is where Israel must grow. Ben-Gurion believed that the unique Jewish spirit could make the desert bloom. He was right — Beth El's roses for the bimah each week come from the Negev.

Geographically, Beersheva is in the center of Israel and now boasts about having 18 daily fast train departures to and from Tel Aviv.

It is an ancient city steeped in biblical history. It is where Abraham made a peace pact with Abimelech. We visited the very well where Abraham planted a tamarisk tree making what we had read in the Torah become newly meaningful. It is at the same time a modern city with new buildings, residences, and park areas.

The crown jewel of Beersheva is Ben-Gurion University with its enrollment of nearly 18,000 students. Of all the places in Israel that honor David Ben-Gurion's lifetime of accomplishments, none would have pleased him more than this place of higher learning. He had a dream that someday there would be a "Hebrew Oxford in the Desert."

All of us were taken with the seriousness of purpose, enthusiasm, and maturity of the BGU student body. A visit to the Blaustein Institute for Desert Studies at Sde Boker provided a fascinating look into the innovative programs BGU has created to make desert areas productive. From solar energy to raising fish in the desert to agricultural advances, BGU's laboratories are producing amazing new approaches for arid land areas.

It is in Sde Boker that David and Paula Ben-Gurion's kibbutz home has become part of a national park that includes their burial site, Ben-Gurion Museum, and Heritage Institute.

While based in Beersheva, we made side trips to Masada, the Dead Sea, and to the Israeli "Grand Canyon," Maktesh Ramon. We dined at a variety of "ethnic" (all kosher) restaurants in Beersheva and whenever there was time did some shopping to help an economy that is sorely depressed because of the

absence of tourists.

The conclusion of our mission was in Jerusalem where we celebrated a peaceful Shabbat and toured the city's many memorable places. It was a perfect ending to our trip to express solidarity with Israel. Let David Ben-Gurion's words be heard, the Negev is Israel's future. It is ready to welcome you and your family and friends.

Special March Program

On Wednesday evening, March 17, the Saul Bendit Adult Institute is sponsoring an exciting program to introduce the spring semester. **Amatzia Baram**, noted Israeli scholar on Iraq, will speak on "Iraq and Its Effect on Israel and the United States." After a Minyan/refreshment break, **Rocky Korr** will lead an open session of Israeli dancing. Everyone is invited to attend. Watch the *Scroll* for more details.

Congregation Beth El

8215 Old Georgetown Road

Bethesda, MD

301-652-8569

Twenty-ninth Annual

Perspectives in Dialogue

Breakfast noshes start at 9:30 a.m.

Program at 10:00 a.m. No fee.

Sunday, February 15, 2004

Dr. Dorree Lynn, Psychologist, syndicated columnist, and media favorite: "Over 50 is Not What it Used to be — New Paradigms."

Sunday, February 29, 2004

June Rogul, National Outreach Director, New Israel Fund: "Israel: Addressing Internal Challenges in a Troubled Time"

Sponsored by the Beth El Men's Club.



Development Corporation for Israel

ISRAEL BONDS

Dear Rabbi Rudolph,

On behalf of the Washington Committee State of Israel Bonds, we would like to thank you for conducting the High Holy Day Appeal at Beth El of Montgomery County. The High Holy Day Appeals are the single most important activity sponsored by Israel Bonds.

In essence, the High Holy Day Appeals are the backbone of the Israel Bonds organization and without you, we could not reach our goal. We are pleased to inform you that, as of today, 302 members have committed to investing \$842,710 this year as compared to \$426,511 from 298 members last year.

Please mark your calendar for Sunday, February 8, for our annual Leadership Recognition Brunch. Once again, thank you for all of your efforts.

Sincerely,

Israel Feldman, Campaign Chair

Frandee R. Woolf, Executive Director

Dr. Mark Birns, Synagogue Chair

Holiday Moments

This is a new section to the *Scroll* with information about upcoming holiday and ritual practices. For further information, look at *The Jewish Holidays* by Rabbi Michael Strassfeld or www.myjewishlearning.com.

Tu B'Shevat – February 7, 2004 (adapted from www.hillel.org)

On Tu B'Shevat we celebrate a New Year for the Trees, rejoicing in the fruit of the tree and the fruit of the vine, celebrating the splendid, abundant gifts of the natural world which give our senses delight and our bodies life. Tu B'Shevat marks the beginning of spring in Israel. Sustaining rains are at the peak of their power and the world responds, brimming with buds of fragrant life.

Tu B'Shevat is a celebration of the renewal of vision and awareness, a celebration of connections and connectedness—to our own inner selves, to the social world of human beings, and to the natural world and its Source.

In the 17th century, the Kabbalists, the Jewish mystics of Safed, developed a special *seder* (order service). Their efforts were influenced by the esoteric meaning in the verse Deuteronomy 20:19: "For man is like the tree of the field."

Modeled on the Passover *seder*, the Tu B'Shevat *seder* included drinking four cups of wine with varying

percentages of red and white wine, representing perhaps the shifting of yearly seasons. The *seder* also included readings on trees and fruit from a range of Jewish literature. The new form of celebration spread from Safed to Sephardi communities in Turkey, Italy and Greece, and later in Europe, Asia and North Africa. Modern adaptations of this centuries old practice have been created by Hillels, Jewish environmental groups, synagogues and others involved in Jewish renewal.

Jewish Community Radio...Estelle Deutsch Abraham, Host and Producer

Special editions of news that are "good" from Israel will be broadcast as part of the weekly Jewish Community Radio program, airing on Sundays at 9:30 a.m. on WUST, 1120 on the am dial.

Good reasons for being proud of Israel at this time!

Family-Friendly Friday Night Service January 30, 2004

(note date change)

Social Hall

8:00 p.m.

Remember the Friday Night Services of your youth?

Wish you could come to a short Shabbat Service together after work and dinner?

Here's your chance to attend a prayer service full of stories, songs, and fellowship, led by Rabbi Greg Harris, Hazzan Abraham Lubin and Sarah Roark.

The January Service will be accompanied by the Beth El Children's Choir, Shir Atid (Elizabeth Simon, director).

Special honors will be given to anyone with a January birthday.

Services will be followed by a desert oneg.

This is one in a series of services which will occur on

March 12, May 14, June 11.