

Scroll

CONGREGATION BETH EL

February 13, 2004

21 Shevat 5764

Volume 53

No. 9

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Message from Rabbi Harris



In the heart of the שמע (Shema) prayer, we say "Teach them (the commandments) diligently to your children and recite them at home and away, night and day."

For the past months, I have been involved in a committee that has been struggling with how to fulfill this commandment. The Religious School Structure Committee is reviewing the structure of our outstanding school to make sure that it remains responsive to the needs of the families of our community while continuing to *teach them diligently*. The Committee is headed by Leesa Fields, VP for Education and Lifelong Learning, and is composed of a dedicated group of professionals and lay leaders, many of whom are experienced in the Religious School.

Many think of this simply as the "2 day or 3 day" question (should our 4th and 5th grades meet 2 days instead of the current 3 days a week). In reality, the question is more complicated and the options are far more varied. The common thread in all of our discussions has been a desire to ensure that our children continue to receive the high quality education that the Beth El Religious School is known for and a sincere desire by everyone to make Judaism meaningful in all of our families' lives. Though each person's position may differ, we have discovered that our underlying interests are very similar. We want our children to have a strong Jewish identity and we are striving to agree upon the components that shape such an identity in today's world.

Continued on Page 3

Shabbat Services

Friday, February 13 6:30 pm Friday Evening Service-BR	Friday, February 27 6:30 pm Friday Evening Service-BR
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	Saturday, February 28 T'rumah: Exodus 25:1-27:19 7:30 & 9:15 am Shabbat Services 9:15 am Rachel Lesser Bat Mitzvah 10:00 am Jr. Congregation-BR 10:30 am Nitzanim-APR 11:00 am USY Shabbat-Rm. 209
Friday, February 20 6:30 pm Friday Evening Service-BR	Friday, March 5 6:30 pm Friday Evening Service-BR
Saturday, February 21 Mishpatim: Exodus 21:1-24:18 7:30 & 9:15 am Shabbat Services 9:15 am Alexander Schutz Bar Mitzvah 9:30 am Minyan Chaverim-APR 10:00 am Jr. Congregation-BR 10:30 am Gan Shabbat-MR 11:00 am Shitufim-Rm. 209	Saturday, March 6 T'tzavveh: Exodus 27:20-30:10 7:30 & 9:15 am Shabbat Services 9:50 am Worship & Study Minyan-MR 10:00 am Jr. Congregation-BR 10:30 am Nitzmin/Gan Shabbat Purim Shabbat Service-APR 11:00 am Shitufim-Rm. 209 7:30 pm Megillah Madness-Sanct. 8:30 pm Traditional Megillah Reading

Sisterhood News

Sisterhood Shabbat

The annual Sisterhood Shabbat Service was held on January 10. More than 50 Sisterhood members demonstrated an impressive level of skill as they led the entire service. President **Leslie Dellon** introduced author **Beryl Lief Benderly** who delivered the **Celia and Audrey Resnik Memorial Lecture** entitled "The History of Jewish Women in America: Jewish Values, American Opportunities." She discussed the contributions Jewish women have made to their communities and to their families during the 350 years since Jews first settled in the colony of New Amsterdam, present day New York. Then as now, Jewish women were heavily involved in the business world, social action projects, and teaching traditional Jewish values to their children. The formation of synagogue Sisterhoods was another way women worked together to improve life in their communities. Thank you to Ms. Benderly and also to **Dr. Harvey Resnik and Family** for establishing the lecture endowment fund.

The **Golda Meir Award** for leadership of Sisterhood and the Congregation was presented to **Dale Gold**, who has served in a variety of volunteer positions at Beth El, including more than 20 years on the Catering Committee.

An elegant and delicious luncheon was coordinated by **Julia Copperman** and prepared by the kitchen staff and members of the Sisterhood Catering Committee. **Patricia Danoff** and **Deborah Leibowitz** chaired the service, with planning help from **Karen Lipkind** and **Esther Wilner**. Yishar Kochechen to all the participants and women whose hard work made this memorable service possible.

Sisterhood Board Members Wanted

Are You Interested in Becoming
More Involved at Beth El?

Why not consider joining the Sisterhood Board!

Women are needed for a variety of positions
and to work on many different
programs and projects.

The one-year board term begins in June 2004

Call Pat Danoff at 301-365-1180 for information

Men's Club News

Saturday, February 14: 5:00 p.m. - Monthly Mincha, Seudah Shlishit, Maariv and Havdalah.

Sunday, February 15: 10:00 a.m. - Dr. Dorree Lynn, "Over 50 is not What it Used to be - New Paradigms." Dr. Lynn is a psychologist and syndicated columnist. This is the 2nd in the Perspectives in Dialogue series this season.

Sunday, February 22: 10:00 a.m. - Membership Meeting.

Sunday, February 29: 10:00 a.m. - "Israel: Addressing Internal Challenges in a Troubled Time." The speaker is June Rogul, National Outreach Director, New Israel Fund. This program is a continuation of the Perspectives in Dialogue series.

Thank you

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Beth El Men's Club for the honor I received at the Blue Yarmalke Awards Dinner. My deepest appreciation also for those who favored me with their warm greetings in the Awards Journal. It was especially nice to have so many friends with us to enjoy a wonderful evening.

Judy and I will remember Sunday night, January 18, 2004 for a long time to come.

Rabbi Samuel Scolnic

Wine Wine Wine

*** GOURMET ***

Israeli kosher wines for Passover & all Beth El events

(only certified Kosher wines are permitted at Beth El)

Learn, Taste & Order from

Expert Lecturer (& Beth El member)

Bob Luskin of Bell Liquor & Wine Shoppe

following Havdalah service

March 13, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

at Congregation Beth El

8215 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda, MD 20814

\$18/person, includes lecture,
wine tasting w/cheese & fruit

Mail to Beth El, c/o Men's Club:

Register us for the wine tasting

Enclosed is a check for \$18 per person

Name: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Zei  gezunt!

Message from Rabbi Harris *continued*

There are real differences in what people think is best for their children but I am guided by the wisdom in the Shema. This central prayer instructs us to *recite them at home and away*. A strong Jewish identity is something that is nurtured, not simply given. Jewish values and character are internalized through the cumulative Jewish experiences at synagogue and at home that guide children to being proud, knowledgeable, and capable Jews. The partnership between the home and school must continually be reinforced to support meaningful Jewish experiences.

Over the next few months, the School Structure Committee will continue to deliberate about how we formally teach our children. You can offer your thoughts at SchoolStructure@bethelmc.org. Simultaneously, we must be purposeful in supporting the formal efforts offered in the synagogue by attending family education programs, making our homes a Jewish place, and taking a great interest in our children's religious development.

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
Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday:
9 a.m. - Noon
Sunday:
9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Items for Purim and Passover
are now available.

Message from the President

Our shul calendar is remarkably full. The depth and breadth of the events happening on a regular basis, in addition to the many worship services, are a testimony to the vitality and creativity of our membership and staff. Ongoing activities range from Ahavat Shir to Yoga, for ages "Nitzanim to Vatikim, and everything in between," to paraphrase Hazzan Lubin.

When special programs occur, such as the Sisterhood's Melaveh Malka on February 7, I hope that all of you will consider attending them, even if the sponsoring group may not be part of your regular Beth El activities. The entire synagogue benefits when we support the auxiliaries, since they in turn support Beth El and provide opportunities to attract and retain new members. These events give all of us an opportunity to share the camaraderie and energy of our larger synagogue community.

There are a number of special programs occurring over the next several weeks. Please make sure to look in the *Scroll* for details. I hope you'll be able to attend and invite others to join you.

February 28 "Dancing Through the Decades,"
sponsored by the Nursery School

March 6 Purim, featuring Megillah Madness, as well as the traditional reading

March 13 Men's Club Wine Tasting Event

March 27 "Taste of Beth El"

And, not that you should start preparing quite yet, but the first Seder (April 5) is right around the corner!
B'shalom, Brent

Save The Date-Tribute to Rabbi Rudolph

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!

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gharris@bethelmc.org
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Announcement of Open Forums Use of Musical Instruments at Friday Evening Services

I am convening several public sessions to discuss the use of musical instruments at Erev Shabbat Services at Beth El. Study of this issue has been proceeding for several years, and I want to share with all interested parties the results of the study.

In brief, musical instruments have not been used at Beth El on Shabbat or Yom Tov. This follows the practice of the majority of Conservative synagogues and the prevailing *halachah* in Orthodox Judaism. Beginning in 2000, we instituted Friday evening Kabbalat Shabbat Services using instruments. The instruments were put away for the Maariv Service, which is considered to mark the beginning of Shabbat regardless of the time of the year. Instruments were not used at all during the months when sundown is earlier than the 6:30 p.m. starting time of the Friday night services. The services with instruments proved to be quite popular, drawing attendance far beyond the traditional Friday night services and providing an enhanced worship experience for many.

In mid-2001, the following question was brought to me and then by me to the Ritual Committee: "Given the success of these instrumental services, which are limited by the daylight realities to less than half the year, can we use instruments all year round?" That would mean that instruments would be played on Shabbat. An eight-member Task Force was formed by Chairman Ben Bronheim. It met with me a number of times to study and consider the relevant texts and precedents. That process was concluded in the early summer of 2002. I, who am authorized to make a decision on this matter as *mara d'atra*, indicated at the end of this process that I found sufficient grounds and precedent to permit the use of instruments all year round and wished to bring this to the congregation, under these circumstances and with these conditions and restrictions:

1. I will provide ample opportunity for the various constituencies (full Ritual Committee, synagogue Board, and the synagogue membership) to learn about this decision and the reasons for it and offer their input. This next step is the final step in that process.
2. Instruments would be used on Friday nights only (and Erev Simchat Torah where they were already in use).
3. Instrumental services would be one alternative on those Friday evenings. There would always be a traditional service as well. Nobody would have to pray with the instruments.
4. Instruments would not be used on Shabbat morning or Chagim (except Simchat Torah), and there is no intention that this would ever be the case.

5. Instrumental services would be under my supervision (so they would not become rock concerts or the like).

Conservative Judaism is based in good part on the creative tension between tradition and change. Beth El was in the forefront of the developments in law and practice that resulted in full equality for women. This was not an easy process, and it certainly involved a rejection of the halachic standards that had been operative throughout most if not all of Jewish history, and I believe a far larger number of congregants were opposed to it, and now it is taken for granted and Beth El has thrived in part because of it.

The use of musical instruments in one of our Friday night Shabbat Services has much more precedent in Jewish practice than did equal treatment of women in the ritual and liturgical realms, and it has much longer standing as an acceptable practice in Conservative Judaism, based on rulings of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards.

At the upcoming sessions, I will share the basis and precedents that argue for my position and against it and seek your input. I am obviously inclined toward making this change in our liturgical life. I believe it makes sense and will have strong backing from the congregation. I want to make sure I am not misjudging the case in either regard.

Sessions, lasting 60-90 minutes, will be held at the following times:

Thursday, February 19, 11:00 a.m.

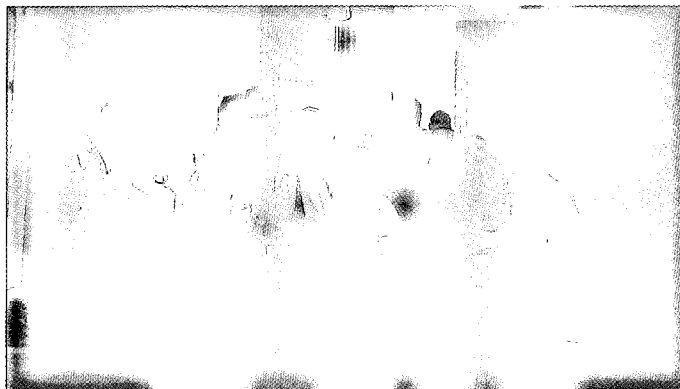
Wednesday, March 3, 7:30 p.m.

If you cannot attend either of these sessions and wish to ask questions or offer your input, please write me c/o Beth El or send me an email at wrudolph@bethelmc.org.

I look forward to the opportunity to discuss this matter with the membership.

Rabbi Bill Rudolph

Historic Minyan



The last minyan in the "old" Chapel took place Hol Hamoed Sukkot (October 13, 2003). Looking forward to the first minyan in the "new" Chapel.

Climb aboard and join us for a delightfully adventurous evening:

A Taste of Beth El

Saturday, March 27, 2004

7:15 p.m. - 11:30 p.m.

Join us for a progressive dinner in members' homes featuring delicious dishes from *Dor Va'Dor*, the fabulous Beth El Sisterhood cookbook.

The evening will end with dessert and schmoozing at Beth El.

How will it work? We will meet in the parking lot of Walt Whitman High School where we will board buses at 7:15 p.m. Buses will leave promptly at 7:30 p.m. to transport you to an evening of food, fun and friendship. From 10:45 p.m. until 11:30 p.m., buses will regularly depart from Beth El and return you to Walt Whitman High School and to your vehicle.

All foods will be either dairy or parve and will be prepared by Beth El volunteers in their homes. If you require special accommodations (food, travel or otherwise), or have any questions, please let us know; we will do our best to satisfy!

Call Linda Herman @ 301-652-4821 or Barbara Klein @ 301-951-8835.



The deadline for reservations is March 1, 2004.
Space is limited so make your reservation today!

Name(s) _____

Phone _____ Number of people attending _____

Price per person is \$25.00. Amount enclosed _____

Special accommodations required (please specify) _____

Please make checks payable to Congregation Beth El.
Return completed reservation form and your payment to:

Taste of Beth El
Congregation Beth El
8215 Old Georgetown Rd.
Bethesda, MD 20814

Set the Table with Torah

by Sheldon Novek

February 14: Yitro

In the parsha called Yitro, we are given the opportunity of reliving the life-altering experience of receiving the law at Mt. Sinai. We imagine, on the one hand, Moses coming down the mountain with the two stone tablets, but according at least to Orthodox tradition, our entire Torah was given there. Whether Moses faced G-d intimately on Sinai or was inspired to write down the words of our Torah or whether several sources combined to form what we call the Five Books of Moses, it's what we have as our guide and training manual of sorts. The Torah needed to be reinterpreted through the later Rabbinic writings to give a more practical guide to living as a Jew, but in its essence, or "p'shat," it is considered to be the word of G-d and treated as such.

I often wonder, upon reading from Yitro, what Moses must have been thinking as he wound his way down the rocky crags of what we call today "Mt. Sinai"... How do I convince them to take these tablets and accept them? How can I convince them that this incredibly powerful yet invisible god has given them to me? Did He write them? Did I write them? If I did, then how do I even know that it was G-d telling me these things? How could He do that? Well, He did bring on ten plagues and split the sea for us...Which of them will accept them and me to lead and guide them? Who will mutiny and question my authority and truth? Why should they believe me? Who else will lead them? Who would want that job? Benefits??? Well, I can only hope for the best and G-d's assistance.

February 21: Mishpatim

How much pressure it must have put on Moses, taking the story literally as we read it, to, at this point, have the burden of convincing this enormous band of tribespeople that he, and only he, possessed the laws they would subsequently be required to follow. In Mishpatim, many of these laws were spelled out for the people, which they were then told they had to live by. They had just been released from some sort of captivity or indentured servitude, had experienced unbelievable miracles or at the very least natural occurrence in the desert, and were now faced with decades of wandering and insecurity. The last thing they probably thought they really needed were new laws to be imposed on them by one man! Granted, according to the text, having witnessed Moses' powers and abilities, why should they question him? But we also learn that they were "stiff-necked" and stubborn (how much has changed?) and were not necessarily anxious to have one person (they just got rid of Pharaoh) impose more rules on them.

February 28: T'rumah

The next portion took much of the pressure off Moses when, in T'rumah, the guidelines for the assembly of the mishkan—the tabernacle—were laid out. An architect or interior designer would love to get his or her hand on the original blueprints, but this portion is the next best thing! Every little detail of the hangings, the poles, the alter, the various chambers—there was no question that this was of paramount importance, that every detail must be followed to the letter. Nothing could be out of place, no part missing or incorrectly assembled. But why was this so important and what did it provide to the people then in the desert, to the later Israelites who settled in Canaan, and to us millenia later?

There had not been any centralized place of worship for the Hebrew slaves prior to their march of freedom. They had no rules for worship before the revelation to Moses at Sinai. All of a sudden, they had not only a set of laws to live by, but they needed a place to perform these newly received directives. They had to learn what was expected to make up their tabernacle and how to design it and how to build it as well as how to transport it. This entire process helped to unify them and give them a central purpose. When the religious and national centers were centralized in Jerusalem, they once again faced the task of erecting the first Temple, what was to be a permanent structure based on the design of the tabernacle which we read about in T'rumah. The first and subsequently the second Temples were considered the holiest places on the earth for Jews, both then and now.

The Temple Mount in Jerusalem today is still considered to be the only truly holy spot on earth for Jews and is one of the uncontestable hurdles in the ongoing but frustrating peace process in Israel. We have not relinquished our faith in the spot where the holy ark rested, which was first sanctified when it traveled with the mishkan in the desert for those forty years. These three parshiyot bring us the revelations, the questioning, the amazement, the first steps of the Jewish nation that we are today.

Join the Youth Department for a night of exciting HOCKEY action

Saturday, February 21, MCI Center

CAPS vs. Vancouver

Only \$22 per ticket

Metro down and back

RSVP to Sheldon, Gabi, Dana or Rachel
by February 18

Open to ALL AGES, parents,
grandparents...(just no pets)



Beth El Sisterhood Annual Women's Seder

Join us and Sing and Dance with Timbrels

**Sunday, March 21, 2004
5:30 – 8:30 p.m.**

*"And Miriam... took a timbrel in her hand and
all the women went out after her with
timbrels and with dances."*

Cost: \$ 20 Sisterhood Members
\$ 25 non-members

Please bring toiletries (any size) for the Community Based Shelter.

You may contribute "Wheat Money" (cash or checks) to feed the hungry in our community. Containers will be on your table.

Note: Due to space limitations, only 175 reservations will be accepted, so send in the form early to avoid disappointment.

Final reservations deadline is March 12.

NO PHONE RESERVATIONS OR PAYMENT AT THE DOOR

Beth El Sisterhood Seder Reservation

Names: _____

Phone Number _____

of Sisterhood members @ \$20 _____

of Non-members @ \$25 _____

Total Amount of Check \$ _____

(made out to **Beth El Sisterhood**)

**Send to: Karen Lipkind
6124 Tuckerman Lane
Rockville, MD 20852**

___ CHECK HERE IF YOU WISH A VEGETARIAN MEAL (and the number) _____

Evening Minyan

The following people are asked to help us with our daily Evening Minyan for the next three weeks. On Sunday through Thursday, the Minyan begins at 8 p.m. and concludes at 8:15 p.m. 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 they can attend at Beth El.

February 15 – February 19

Michael and Tamara Simon
Daniel and Irene Simpkins
Jack and Flora Singer
Jana Singer
Stuart and Arlene Sirkin
David Sisen
Ronald and Wynne Sitrin
Kathryn Ann Sklar
Matthew Slater and Faith Roessel
Irving and Lois Slott
Albert and Sylvia Small
Arthur and Myra Smith
Henry and Laurie Smith
Jason and Marilyn Smolen
Bernard and Elaine Snyder
Jerome and Rose Snyder
Mark E. Sobel
Arnie and Jo Sohinki
Jose and Tutti Sokol
Laszlo and Annamarie Sokoly

February 22 – February 26

Steve and Offie Soldin
Mitchell and Rachelle Solkowitz
Steve and Phyllis Solomon
Jerome and Lisa Sorkin
Melvin and Frances Spaeth
Bertram and Judith Spector
Barry and Karen Spergel
Allen and Rita Spiegel
Bruce Spiegel and Glenda Koby
Barbara Spitzer
Alan and Nancy Spivack
Rosalie Sporn
Neil and Sherri Stahl
Thomas Stanton and Martha Zaslow
Carrie Stein
Donald Stein and Linda Katz
Howard and Holly Stein
Michael Steinberg and Lisa Shapiro
Norman and Ruth Stein
Larry and Lya Stern

February 29 – March 4

Maurice and Merrily Sterns
Rochelle Stern
Helen Stettner
Evelyne Steward
Jacob and Anita Stillman
Jon and Joyce Stone
Suzanne Stone
Bruce and Suzanne Strauss
Martin and Kitty Strauss
Michael and Sharon Strauss
Martha Strauss
Steven and Linda Strauss
Evan and Danielle Sultan
Anne Sumner
Gary and Nanci Sundel
Steven Susswein and Wendy Wyte
Leonore Swerdlow
Samuel Swersky
Corinne Swoff
Ellen Swoff

New Members

The Beth El community extends its warm welcome to the following members who have recently joined or rejoined the synagogue. If one or more of these families live in your neighborhood, please reach out and personally welcome them. We encourage the new members to take advantage of the wonderful activities Beth El has to offer and hope you will let us know if you have questions or concerns that we can help to address.

David and Allison Karasik, 5471 Grove Ridge Way, North Bethesda, MD 20852 301-493-8521
Sophia Karasik, Noa Karasik karasikd@sec.gov
Greg and Bernadette Kiel, 8008 Old Georgetown Rd, MD 20814 301-986-1606
Lucas Kiel, Joshua Kiel
Howard and Felicia Schweitzer, 5813 Lenox Rd, Bethesda, MD 20817 301-229-7877
Emily Schweitzer, Sophie Schweitzer schweitzer@comcast.net

Shabbat Morning Family and Youth Services at Congregation Beth El

Service Name	Applicable Ages	Room	Times	Leaders
Nitzanim	birth to kindergarten	APR	10:30-11:30 am 2nd,4th,5th Shabbat	Rachelle Solkowitz, Glenda Koby, Rodger Jacobson - Pres.
Gan Shabbat	kindergarten-2nd grade	Meeting Room	10:30-11:30 am 1st, 3rd Shabbat	Rachelle Solkowitz, Sarah Roark
Shitufim	3rd & 4th grades	Room 209	11:00 am-Noon 1st, 3rd Shabbat	Anita Lieb, Nora Levy
Jr. Congregation	5th grade and up	BR	10:00-11:15 am Every Shabbat	Cheryl Kreiser

Please feel free to speak with the individual leaders or coordinators about any one of the services, or contact Sarah Roark, 301-652-8573, ext. 319

Beth El Worship and Study Minyan

The Beth El Worship and Study Minyan will meet on Saturday, March 6, in the Meeting Room downstairs from 9:50 a.m. 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 toward adults. Contact **Dan Hirsch**, 301-654-7289, DOHirsch@aol.com; **Sid Getz**, 301-530-2215, Sidgetz@aol.com; or **Mark Levitt**, 301-365-5365, MLevitt@Nelliscorp.com, for more information.

Learners' Minyan

Rabbi Harris leads this monthly minyan focused on learning the how's and why's of the Shabbat Service. Each month focuses on a different part of the service. It is highly participatory and discussion oriented. All are welcome. The next service is Saturday, March 13, at 10:00 a.m. in the Meeting Room. Contact Rabbi Harris if you have questions about the Learners' Minyan.

Minyan Chaverim

Minyan Chaverim meets on the third Shabbat of each month and will meet next on Saturday, March 20, from 9:30 a.m. to Noon in the All Purpose Room. Minyan Chaverim is a community-led service, featuring complete recitations of Shacharit and Musaf as well as full Torah reading, and emphasizing a spirited and participatory nusach. Following the synagogue kiddush, participants (and for that matter, all comers) are invited to attend a pot-luck (kosher dairy) lunch at a nearby home, which includes a Torah discussion, zmirot, and plenty of good kibitzing. For more information, please contact **Debbie Feinstein** at debbie_feinstein@yahoo.com or 301-767-1178.

Nitzanim News

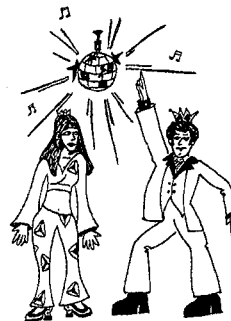
Nitzanim has been having lots of fun this winter and plans for lots more. We had a special 5th Shabbat service led by our great volunteer, **Barrie Tabin-Berger**. Barrie brings such wonderful energy to our service. Then on Sunday, February 1, we had our Tu B'Shevat crafts and seder. The kids really enjoyed the crafts and pizza dinner. Thank you to all the volunteers!

As we gear up for Spring, we will have a combined Nitzanim/Gan Shabbat service on March 6 with a special celebration for Purim - children are encouraged to come to Shul in their costumes (parents too!) We will also have our annual Spring Shabbat dinner - please contact Bucky if you would like to help with the dinner.

Nitzanim is working to develop a core group of parents who are willing to volunteer and take on organizational roles within the group. This will enable us to be a more cohesive community and to provide more programs and educational opportunities for our

children. If you are interested in being part of the Nitzanim Committee and taking on a leadership role, please contact Bucky Jacobson at 301-320-2739 or at rodgerjacobson@att.net.

Todah Rabbah to **Caren and Michael Ravitch** for sponsoring the Nitzamin Kiddush on January 31 in honor of the fourth birthday of their daughter, **Jessica**.



MEGILLAH MADNESS RETURNS

Are you ready for a little Persian Night Fever?

Better make sure that
polyester suit fits, because this year,
it's going to be a

Rock 'n Disco Purim

Saturday night

March 6, 2004,

7:30 p.m.

Park in the Bethesda United Methodist Church
across Old Georgetown Road.

Purim Shabbat Service

Saturday, March 6, 2004

All Purpose Room

10:30-11:30 a.m.

for families with children age birth to eight.

Come in costume!

This combined

Nitzanim / Gan Shabbat Service

will be enhanced with

a Purim play, Purim songs,
and special Purim kiddush.

Shalom from the Youth Department

As I write this, I am sitting in Park City, UT where Asher and I are attending the Sundance Film Festival, which is truly an amazing experience! We've already met McCauley Culkin so our experience here has been complete! There are exciting things happening in other places as well, such as at Beth El!

Our Bonim "builders" did a wonderfully creative jobs creating challah plates for Shabbat—Rachel loves doing crafts projects so I know we can expect lots more beautiful projects from them! Our "Machar-nikim" went to see the age-old classic *Peter Pan* with Dana and also had a blast. Our Kadima kids have also been kept busy with a combined Upper School dinner with Gabi, a movie night when they went out to see "*Cheaper by the Dozen*" and let's not forget the ski trip to Whitetail with our USY chapter and their counterparts from Ohr Kodesh. Even though I much prefer to sit at the bottom of the slopes here in the cafe, they had an awesome time whizzing down the mountains there and enjoying the winter fun. And speaking of USY...

The USY Corner

Our USYers have been extremely busy so far in 2004—let's review: First, we initiated our first meeting of "The Best of Saturday Morning Live," a new program which meets monthly at shul for some Torah, some discussion, some schmoozing, and, of course, lunch! We also ran the first of the Kabbalat Shabbat Services we are leading for the residents of the Springhouse Nursing Home, also once a month. It is finally basketball season again and we, as usual, have put together an all-star team of 12 players under the cool and confident hand of our lifetime coach Jon Gang! As this went to print, we had yet to play our first game, but those winning scores will be coming in soon! Rachel has jumped right in as well as co-advisor and has been getting her USY feet wet too!

Besides all that, they of course went on their ski trip and are planning a bowling event as well. Bagels continue to be sold, with the next sales occurring on Feb. 22 and 29. Our January Shabbat dinner was held at the Prada/Singer home and I want to thank Jana for all her hard work and delicious dinner! We were also treated to a talk given by Ezra Weinblatt, a member of our community and former USYer who shared some fascinating stories of his experiences in the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) where he served over the last couple of years. Our February dinner was at the Postar home, and likewise, I want to thank Adcen and Michael for their more than gracious hospitality.

I attended the 2004 Jewish Youth Directors Conference which was held in our back yard (no, not in the trailer) in Bethesda. It was an exciting couple of

days of sharing ideas, concerns, networking and gaining lots of new and innovative programming ideas. I look forward to implementing some of these over the next few months. In the meantime, don't forget about the family CAPS ice-hockey game we are attending on Feb. 21 at the MCI Center—in case you have not yet made arrangements to join us, give me a call—I'm sure we'll be able to squeeze you in! And lastly, don't miss this year's Purim celebration and presentation—several of our kids will be joining the adults this year to make it even a bigger and better production!

I wish all of you a very happy Purim. Be happy, it's Adar..

Till next time, Sheldon

School Structure Committee

The School Structure Committee has been created to address parental interests about the organization of the Religious School, in particular the six hour, three day a week model currently in use for grades four, five, and six. The Committee will make a recommendation in spring 2004 to the Beth El Board as to whether the current school structure should be modified or alternatives, such as a two day a week model, offered. This is a complex issue requiring our attention to maintain the highest educational standards for our children while recognizing the many strains on families. The Committee is interested in hearing opinions of the Beth El community on this important matter. Please share your thoughts and opinions by addressing an email to the Committee at schoolstructure@bethelmc.org or by leaving a note addressed to Leesa Fields, Chair of the School Structure Committee, in the synagogue office by February 15, 2004. For a fuller description of this issue, please see the previous edition of the *Scroll*.

Stay Up-To-Date With Beth El Activities

The Beth El listserv currently reaches several hundred member households, providing reminders about activities as well as information that may not have made it into the *Scroll*, mazal tovs and condolences, school and program changes due to inclement weather, etc. General Announcements about upcoming events are sent out every Tuesday or Wednesday, and a ten-day calendar, "The Week Ahead," is sent every Friday.

If you are not yet on the listserv, just contact Pam Kocher (pkocher@bethelmc.org) with your name and e-mail address and she will make sure you are included. Stay connected with Beth El!