

BHBIRochester.org
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Congregation Beth Hamedresh – Beth Israel

BULLETIN

Editor: Stan Schaffer

January Vice-President's Message

Friends,

We had a very successful Chanukah party on December 9th. Thanks are due to Janet Grable for leading the preparations, with help from Judith Mercer, Esther Vogelstein, and Steve Teitel. Thanks also to Ruth Teitel, Emily Fishman, Esther Vogelstein, Nina Kliensky, Harris and Aline Honickman, and all others who helped set up, serve and clean up. Leon led a question & answer trivia session. I think some of the questions were from last year, but thankfully our memories have faded to the extent that it was effectively all brand new to most of us. The food, drinks (including adult drinks) and the dessert were great. Thanks to all who helped.

I recently attended a gathering of representatives of most of the Jewish congregations at the Farash Foundation, to discuss a proposal to build a campus for life-long Jewish education. The campus would include separate facilities for the three Jewish day schools that currently operate in Rochester. There would also be a facility for adult education for the entire Jewish community and the Foundation is open to suggestions to create facilities for after school Hebrew schools to be run by various congregations. They stressed that there is no intention of interfering with the schools run by the various congregations or of drawing students away, but there are smaller congregations, such as ours, that are challenged for providing after school Hebrew school education. They showed a sketch of a proposed campus – but stressed that it was just a preliminary proposal and welcome suggestions from all the congregations and Jewish community.

Some of the members of the Executive Committee also had a recent conversation with Rabbi Aviva Berg and Gary Cohen of Temple Beth David to discuss collaborating to have joint activities. Temple Beth David is planning a Tu B'Shevat seder on Shabbat, 1/26/13 and they have invited us to come and participate. Temple Beth David is also interested in collaborating on future services and we will discuss that in the bulletin when the time comes.

This is a time of year, when many of us travel to see family and friends. Please drive safely and enjoy the beginning of winter.

Your regularly scheduled President's message by Steve Teitel should resume next month.

See you in shul,

Harris Honickman

**Celebrate the New Year of the Trees – Tu B'Shevat
at a Special Tu B'Shevat Seder
Following Joint Shabbat Morning Services
at Temple Beth David
on Saturday, January 26th**

BHBI CALENDAR OF EVENTS – JANUARY 2013

Friday	Jan 4	7:00 PM	Shabbat Evening Service at Heather Heights in Pittsford Light candles at 4:30 PM
Saturday	Jan 5	9:30 AM	Shabbat Morning Service Blessing of the New Month. Torah: Shemot
Sunday	Jan 6	9:00 AM	Service, Breakfast and Discussion
Wednesday	Jan 9	7:30 PM	Small Conservative Shul Collaborative Torah Study at BHBI
Friday	Jan 11	7:00 PM	Joint Shabbat Evening Service with Temple Beth Am at Beth Am Light candles at 4:38PM
Saturday	Jan 12	9:30 AM	Joint Shabbat Morning Service with Temple Beth Am at BHBI Torah: Vaeirah
Sunday	Jan 13	9:00 AM	Service, Breakfast and Discussion
Monday	Jan 14	7:30 PM	Monthly Meeting of the BHBI Board of Trustees
Friday	Jan 18	8:00 PM	Shabbat Evening Service Light candles at 4:46 PM
Saturday	Jan 19	9:30 AM	Shabbat Morning Service Torah: Bo
Sunday	Jan 20	9:00 AM	Service and Discussion
Friday	Jan 25	8:00 PM	Shabbat Evening Service Light candles at 4:55 PM
Saturday	Jan 26	9:00 AM	Torah Study at Temple Beth David
		9:45 AM	Joint Shabbat Morning Service with Temple Beth David at Beth David Torah: Vayechi. Service followed by Tu B'Shevat Seder.
Sunday	Jan 27	9:00 AM	Service, Breakfast and Discussion

SMALL CONSERVATIVE SHUL COLLABORATIVE TORAH STUDY

The next Small Conservative Shul Collaborative Torah Study session will be held at BHBI on Wednesday, January 9th at 7:30 p.m. Come join in the lively discussion along with congregants from BHBI, Temple Beth Am and Temple Beth David.

BHBI WEBSITE

Have you checked out the BHBI web site lately? If you haven't there is a lot that you're missing. The web site at www.BHBIRochester.org provides information about many aspects of our congregation, lists the BHBI calendar, has electronic versions of this and previous bulletins going back several years, has an extensive history of our congregation along with historic photos, includes photos from several BHBI dinners, picnics and other special events, and has the unique Adon Olam Songbook with information on over 100 melodies for Adon Olam.

MELTON ADULT MINI-SCHOOL COURSE ON THE HOLOCAUST

The Melton Adult Mini-School is starting a new course titled 'The Holocaust As Reflected in Diaries and Memoirs' with Professor Michael Dobkowski. Students will explore first person accounts of the Holocaust. Two sessions will be available: Wednesday mornings at 10 a.m. at the Summit or Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. at the Jewish Federation. The classes will meet on 1/9, 1/16, 1/23, 1/30, 2/6, 2/13, 2/20, 2/27, 3/3 and 3/13. Cost: \$175. For information, contact Jacqui Lipschitz at 461-0490 x8651 or jlipschitz@jewishrochester.org

**DONATIONS
THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!**

GENERAL FUND

In honor of Chanukah
Phil and Annette Garver

In memory of Emma Aranow
Eileen Kovel

In memory of Ida Taub
Esther Shiffman and Helene Davida Phillips

In memory of Louis Gastel
Ruth Polur

The Farash Foundation

The Wolk Foundation

**THANK YOU TO OUR KIDDUSH SPONSORS
FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER**

December 1	The Congregation
December 8	The Congregation
December 15	Jill Clark-Foulkes in memory of her aunt, Barbara Bertman
December 22	Leon Metlay and Nina Klionsky in honor of Hannah's birthday and their collegiate nieces' return home

**MAKE YOUR PURCHASES AT AMAZON.COM
AND SUPPORT BHBI AT THE SAME TIME!**

Why not contribute to BHBI while making on-line purchases? It's easy to make purchases on-line at Amazon.com and support BHBI financially at the same time. Just go to the BHBI web page at www.BHBIRochester.org and click on the Amazon.com link. Each time you make a purchase after linking to Amazon.com from our web page, BHBI gets a percentage of the purchase price. The more you buy in this way, the more BHBI makes!

**DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO IS UNAFFILIATED AND INTERESTED
IN JOINING A CONGREGATION?**

Let them know about BHBI's special free 3 month trial membership (available to prospective first-time new members only). Have them contact BHBI at 244-2060 or BHBI@frontiernet.net and we will be happy to give them information about BHBI and this great offer!!

THE SHERUT PROJECT

The Jewish Federation has developed a new program called The Sherut Project to engage 25-45 year olds to shape our Jewish future. The Sherut Project will offer meaningful Jewish education opportunities tailored to individual needs. It will assist individuals in networking with other young professionals around multiple disciplines. Members will be encouraged to engage in service to the Jewish and general community and will connect families in meaningful Jewish contexts. The Sherut Project will also connect young Jewish adults with activities interest in the global Jewish world. As part of The Sherut Project, the Federation is offering a program called Ramim which debuted in 2010-11 to resounding success. This extraordinary global platform partners professionals in Rochester with those in Modi'in, Israel, Rochester's Partnership 2Gether community. Participants share ideas, strengths, challenges and models of success; empowering both communities. Built into the program are opportunities for personal, professional and spiritual growth. The next information session will be held on Thursday, January 3rd at 7:30 pm at the Jewish Federation. For information or to RSVP contact Debbie Zarkowsky at dzarkowsky@jewishrochester.org. Subsequently, JYROC – a Jewish business/networking group, will host an event for young Jewish professionals and graduate students ages 21-35 on Monday, January 14th at 7:00 p.m. at a site yet to be determined. Dennis Kessler will be speaking. For more information or to RSVP, contact Shaina Kovalsky at jyrochester@gmail.com.

Yahrzeits

At the following Shabbat Services, we will read the names of our late loved ones whose Yahrzeits will occur on that Shabbat or during the following week.

January 4-5	Tevet	January 11-12	Shevat	January 18-19	Shevat	January 25-26	Shevat
Goldie Simon*	23	Jean Spencer	1	Herman Strauss*	8	Gidda Strauss*	16
Leah Keyfetz*	24	Morris Weinstein*	2	Dvora Brodie*	9	Morris Gurian*	17
Joseph Morris*	24	Etta Levinson*	4	Samuel Goldman*	9	Stanley Clark*	18
Esther Sanzel*	24	Ida Silver*	4	Daniel Hirsch*	10	Samuel Spencer	18
Samuel Meilstein*	26	Sidney Appelbaum*	6	Hyman Aaron Nusbaum*	10	Gitla Perkal*	18
Ida Boyarsky*	27	Jacob Komenski*	6	Jacob Swartz	12	Besse Gold	20
Philip Hershkowitz	27	Morris Suskind*	7	Miriam Weinberger	12	Benjamin Lapides*	20
Jack Glazer	28			Abraham Newell*	13	Alexander Phillips	21
Joe Lazarus*	28			Anna Sanow	13	Simon Pogat*	21
		Denotes name memorialized on BHBI Memorial Plaque		Rose Salzberg	14	Jacob Rubinstein	21

We pray that our mourners will be comforted among all the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem and that the memory of the deceased continues to be a blessing to all who knew them.

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So far our *TOPS* Gift Card fundraiser has been quite successful. Remember, *TOPS* Gift Cards are now available through BHBI in \$50 denominations. To purchase *TOPS* Gift Cards, contact Stan Schaffer at 473-8072 or by e-mail at stanschaffer@frontiernet.net

MEMORIAL PLAQUES

You can also memorialize a friend or loved one on a BHBI memorial plaque. Our memorial plaques are very reasonably priced. For more information, contact Stan Schaffer at 473-8072 or stanschaffer@frontiernet.net

GOODSEARCH.COM

Goodsearch.com is an on-line internet search program that pays non-profit organizations like BHBI a fee every time someone uses their search service. Go to www.goodsearch.com, enter the search term that you want and put in BHBI on the line where it says Who Do You Goodsearch For? BHBI will benefit from each search you make!

AD SPONSORS

We are always looking for additional businesses that are interested in placing an ad in the BHBI Bulletin. If you know of someone whose business or company may be interested, contact Stan Schaffer at 473-8072 or by e-mail at stanschaffer@frontiernet.net

Tu B'Shevat

Adapted from Kolel.org

Perhaps even more than any other Jewish holiday, Tu B'Shevat has evolved over two thousand years of Jewish history. This year, Tu B'Shevat falls on Saturday, January 26, 2013. The words Tu B'Shevat literally mean "the fifteenth [day in the month] of Shevat." Originally, in post-biblical times, Tu B'shevat was simply the yearly date for reckoning the age of trees for purposes of taxes and of *Orlah* (the first three years during which a tree's fruit was considered strictly God's property and not to be eaten). Later, the mystics developed a Tu B'shevat Seder that represented both their connection to the land of Israel and reflected their ideas of God's relationship to the world using the imagery of a cosmic tree.

At the beginning of the Zionist movement, Tu B'Shevat again took on new meaning as planting trees became a symbol for the Jewish re-attachment to the land of Israel. The most recent transformation has re-popularized Tu B'Shevat into a holiday of Jewish environmentalism as a sort of Jewish Earth Day because of its association with trees and, by extension, with nature.

Judaism & Trees

Trees figure prominently in Jewish literature and lore—from the very first trees planted at creation and the Garden of Eden, to the trees worshipped by King Ahaz in the final chapters of the Bible. In the Bible, the Hebrew word for tree appears over 150 times, and more than 100 different kinds of trees, shrubs and plants are named. The Mishnah (*Masechet Zera'im* in particular deals with laws of agriculture) adds hundreds of names of plants. Midrashim, too, often use plants in similes and parables. In all, over 500 different plants are mentioned in classical Jewish sources.

Trees and plants were important in the ancient world. Trees furnished wood for construction of buildings, boats, furniture and smaller articles. Many trees provided nutritious and tasty fruit. Grains and vegetables were cultivated and wild plants were gathered. Other plants were used for food, medicinal purposes, herbs and spices, incense important for use in sacrifices, rope and cloth fibers. Sap and oils were extracted from plants and trees.

What are trees?

Trees are the tallest and longest living plants on the earth. It is difficult not to be inspired by an enormous tree, whose roots are in the earth, yet whose branches seem to touch the very sky. Today, since many buildings dwarf trees, and we are jaded, we need to go to the redwood forests to be impressed by these towering giants, in the ancient world, trees would have been the tallest structures, (except for mountains, which also were often a site of sacred power). Trees typically survive for several human generations, and their longevity must have also impressed the ancient Israelites. For these reasons, it is not surprising that trees were powerful symbols for the ancient Israelite, and many significant trees are featured in biblical stories.

Most of us today live much farther removed from the natural world than did our biblical ancestors who lived and worked outdoors for much of their lives. It is only natural that the Bible used images of the great outdoors that surrounded them. Although the Bible is not a botanical textbook, and often mentions plants and trees only incidentally, the Bible is rich in natural imagery, metaphors and parables. Often, our understanding of the biblical text is impoverished because we no longer appreciate their meaning.

The Bible uses images and descriptions of trees but is not meant to be a botanical encyclopedia. The names and descriptions of plant (and animal) life are casual; many common species of plants are not mentioned in the Bible (like the carob), while others appear only once (such as ebony, pistachio, and walnut). Tu B'Shevat is a day in the Jewish calendar which encourages us to take a deeper look at our connection to trees and to the nature of Israel.

OFFICE: The synagogue office is checked regularly for mail and messages. The synagogue phone is 244-2060. For urgent issues, call Steve Teitel at 473-5741 or Stan Schaffer at 473-8072. You can also e-mail us at BHBI@frontiernet.net

WANT TO REMEMBER OR HONOR SOMEONE OR A SPECIAL OCCASION? *Consider sponsoring a kiddush or making a donation to any one of our funds* (General Operating, Kiddush, Library, Torah, Rabbi Aaron Solomon Scholarship, Our Youth, Special Events or the Sam Malina Memorial Fund). Please indicate which fund you would like your donation to go to and we will send out an acknowledgement card as you indicate and print an announcement in this bulletin. A standard sponsored kiddush at BHBI costs just \$40 while a larger enhanced kiddush is just \$50.

BULLETIN CONTENT What do you enjoy reading in the BHBI Bulletin? Is there something that you would like added (or taken out)? If so, please let Stan Schaffer know. We always appreciate feedback.

DID YOU MISPLACE YOUR BULLETIN? Don't worry. BHBI Bulletins going back several years can now be found on our web page: www.BHBIRochester.org

WANT TO GET YOUR BULLETIN HOT-OFF-THE-PRESS? Consider having us e-mail it to you! Contact Stan Schaffer at: stanschaffer@frontiernet.net

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