

Being Partners with God

Gary Wolfman, Religious Director

As I am writing this article, it is Chanukah and we are giving and receiving gifts from each other. We give gifts to our children, parents, teachers and close friends. We reach out to one another and share our affection for each other. This holiday remembers a people fighting for their religious freedom and we remember partly by giving gifts to one another. During this time we sometimes forget the role of God in our lives and think little of God's involvement in this holiday. But after Chanukah we come upon a unique opportunity to truly become partners with God.

Early in February, during the height of our winter, we celebrate a festival of planting trees. Even though we live in a very cold climate in February, it is this exact time that God asks us to become partners in making our world a better place. Tu Bishvat reminds us that the people of Israel and Jews everywhere have worked with God to change the land of Israel from a desert into a healthy, beautiful land.



It is not only in Israel that we strive to make our world a better place. Living in northeastern Wisconsin, we also strive to make our part of the world into a beautiful garden of God's love. Around our own Temple, Barbara Kuhn and others have striven to bring the beauty of God's nature into our own special place. Everything that happens within our Temple passes through this beauty surrounding our place of worship and learning.

Let us this Tu Bishvat give donations to beautify the Temple grounds that we use throughout the year. Let us contribute to the fund that brings beauty into our own lives and helps us spiritually every time we enter or leave our religious home. In this way, we can together build a garden of hope for all who walk through our grounds.

During this year's celebration of Tu Bishvat, let us join together to bring the beauty of nature to our own house of worship, and if possible, also give to continue to make Israel a beautiful place for all Jewish people. Let us work to be partners with God in making our world a more special place for all people through the beauty of nature.

The Road Ahead

Avi Stern

First and foremost, I want to extend the gratitude of my entire family for all your thoughts, and prayers during this difficult time. None of us knows with any real certainty what lays ahead, but every e-mail, every card, every meal is a reminder to Liz how much she is loved. Each mitzvah is a piece of inspiration that she'll carry with her and draw upon for strength in the upcoming months.

So with gratitude and humility, I say Thank You.

In light of Liz's pancreatic cancer diagnosis, Ed Klug has agreed to take on the presidency of our congregation. This transition had long been planned, we simply accelerated the timing a bit earlier than originally scheduled. For the record: Ed's a great guy and will do a superior job at the helm.

And, again, I find myself saying Thank You. I may not have always offered the most polished leadership skills during my tenure, but my efforts have always been genuine and well-intentioned. I'm grateful for having had the opportunity to serve and I, hopefully, leave our synagogue well-positioned for the future.

(As part of the presidential hand-off, Ed did ask me to continue writing this bi-monthly column. While I don't feel particularly literate or eloquent in recent days, I think it's worth trying. Maybe penning these items will be therapeutic as well. It couldn't hurt, so I've agreed to give it the ol' college try.)

For the Stern Family, being members of Congregation B'nai Israel has always been a big part of our self-identity. That was true before Liz's diagnosis and it's probably even more paramount today. We want our sons to continue to take pride in their Judaism and their community. We intend to continue on our faith journey. I'm not sure what form that will take or what accommodations we'll have to make, but as my all-time favorite writer, Stephen King, once wrote, "Get busy living, or get busy dying."

We intend to live life, not live cancer.

For those of you who wish to learn more about what Liz is facing, I refer you to the following Web site:

<http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/lizstern>

That's where you can learn the latest information about her cancer battle. And, personally, it feels like a much more appropriate venue for such conversation than

Facebook (which does serve its purposes, but not for substantive discussions on something as serious and personal as this.

Please keep those Mi Shebeirach's coming. I'm neither a rabbi nor a doctor, but in my gut I have confidence that if there's a miracle to be had, it will be found somewhere at the intersection of faith and science.

For all the love you've sent us, I send my love back to you.

Classroom Corner

Ellyn Lahr

Welcome to 2012!

I hope that you are all staying warm and enjoying the blessings of the December holiday season.

We have so many giving and caring congregants and I'd like to take a moment to say "thank you" to everyone who has donated their time and helping hands to various activities in and around B'nai Israel.

In October, several families spent their Sunday away from religious school participating in a wonderful event called *Servapalooza*, which took place at First Congregational Church in Oshkosh. This event called together people from several religious groups to take part in a day of community service. Thanks to Lowell Louis for organizing volunteers for this annual event. Many thanks to: Whitney Schreiber; Lowell and Gaye Louis; Jeff and Brenna Glassheim, Lauryn, Katy and Ellyn Lahr; Mark, Kristen, Drew, Beau and Maeve Lasky (and others I may have forgotten to mention!) for getting up early to lend a hand at the church and at other charitable organizations around town.

In November our B'nai family got to try their hand at something we don't normally get to do....string lights on a giant Menorah! Braving the cold on a Saturday morning were Dan and

Myra Krhin, Ken and Sue Friedman, and the Lahr family to apply lights to an 8x10 foot giant holiday display for the Oshkosh Celebration of Lights at Menominee Park. The display was open from Thanksgiving through the first of 2012. We are glad to be able to be a part of this annual community event, but hope they keep the display intact so next year they can just plug it in and we don't have to do a repeat performance of stringing the lights!

Many hands make for great Religious School events as well. Thanks to Dawn Fritzell for organizing our Chanukah latke making and our Chanukah family lunch and program. We also appreciate the many families that came on Sunday morning to shred, fry and socialize while making latkes or to cook, set up and clean up on the Sunday of our program. We enjoyed our luncheon and the performances by our many talented youngsters, who performed to a full house on Sunday, 12/18.

Our Religious School is always in need of volunteers, especially substitute teachers as the weather outside gets frightful! If you are interested in taking over an occasional Sunday morning class, or can lend a hand to the many various Sunday a.m. activities, please contact Ellyn Lahr. We will definitely need extra hands in the coming months!

Best of health and great happiness in 2012!



Community Notes

Ben Frank

Meals for the Stern Family

I have created a food calendar online (at the Food Tidings website) for people to use, so as to avoid conflicts and provide food that the Sterns would like and can use (without being overwhelmed.) All you need to do is make sure that everyone gets the link down below.

Click the link, sign up for a day, and everyone will know that day is taken, hence, no duplicates. Please note that Liz stated a preference for Monday - Thursday meals and NO pork products, such as bacon, pork chops, pork roasts, etc.

<http://tinyurl.com/sternmeals>

Michele and Marshall Missner

Dear Temple B'nai Israel,

As many of you know, we have sold our house in Appleton, and will head for warmer climates. Right now, we are pretty much homeless, but will head next week to Lafayette, LA, where our son Perry and his family live. We have rented a furnished apartment there for a month and will go to Austin, TX, where we will live, during that time to find a rental. Our cell phone numbers are (920) 205-2353 (Michele) and (920) 205-4229 (Marshall). My e-mail address is mmmissner@gmail.com.

We have been a part of the B'nai Israel community for almost 40 years. It is with sadness that we leave many good friends and fond memories.

I was the first woman president of the congregation, and our son Perry was Gary Wolfman's first Bar Mitzvah in the community. At that time there were 9 children total in the religious school! We have seen the community

and the building go through changes and try to anticipate the needs of the congregation. Marshall has been the Torah reader many years. The Temple has been a vital part of our lives.

We hope that you will visit us in Austin, when we have a place to live! Sherry and Steve Taylor came last winter and it was great fun.

We wish each and every one of you the best and we will stay in touch.

Barbara Kuhn

Help²

Next time you are at Goodwill pick up a gift certificate – \$18 or \$36 is a good amount – and send it to your local high school, Boys & Girls Club, domestic abuse or homeless shelter. Your contribution will be “squared,” benefiting an individual person as well as Goodwill Industries!

Steve Zimmerman

My family lived in Oshkosh from 1947 to the late '60s. My parents had a furniture store on Main St. near the bridge.

I graduated from the old Oshkosh High, went to UW-Madison for two years, and then transferred to the University of Arizona in Tucson. Yes, those cold winters drove me out and eventually my parents, after a stint in Milwaukee.

When my mother Besse Zimmerman died, my second wife, who is not Jewish, wanted to continue the family tradition of having a Passover seder. She and her daughter took a class at the local Jewish federation. Before the class began, the instructor asked the students if their family came from an Ashkenazi or Sephardic tradition. My wife quickly responded that our family was Ashkenazi.

When asked how she knew this, she replied, “Because my husband is from Oshkosh.”

Perhaps the Temple community would appreciate the recognition my wife granted as the source of a Jewish tradition.

B'nai Israel on Facebook

If you are on Facebook and are not currently a member of the B'nai Israel Facebook group, please send a request to join!

The group address is:

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/254679448902/>

Vince Salvia

Yahrzeits

Yahrzeits for the months of January and February 2012 were not available at the time of publication.

The Yahrzeit list will be e-mailed separately to those who receive the newsletter by e-mail. The copy of the newsletter posted on the B'nai Israel website will be amended to include the Yahrzeit information once it is available.

Going forward, please send new Yahrzeit requests and corrections to Vince Salvia at (920) 205-8825 or vincs@cadreservices.com.

Congregation Board of Trustees

Officers:

| | | |
|-----------|---------------|---|
| President | Ed Klug | (920) 733-0268 edward.klug@siionline.com |
| Treasurer | Marty Finkler | (920) 735-0714 mdfinkler@netscape.net |
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| Dawn Fritzell | Ellyn Lahr |
| Jason Hirschberg | Lorraine Schreiber |
| Jeff Kent | Avi Stern |

January

| <i>Sun</i> | <i>Mon</i> | <i>Tue</i> | <i>Wed</i> | <i>Thu</i> | <i>Fri</i> | <i>Sat</i> |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|--|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 Religious School 9:00 a.m. Board Meeting | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 Shabbat Service 7:00 p.m. | 14 |
| 15 Religious School 9:00 a.m. Adult Ed 10:00 a.m. | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 Shabbat Service 10:00 a.m. |
| 22 Religious School 9:00 a.m. | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | |

2012

February

| <i>Sun</i> | <i>Mon</i> | <i>Tue</i> | <i>Wed</i> | <i>Thu</i> | <i>Fri</i> | <i>Sat</i> |
|---|------------|--|------------|------------|--|---|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 Religious School 9:00 a.m. Board Meeting | 6 | 7 Tu B'Shevat begins at sunset | 8 | 9 | 10 Soup & Service 6:15 p.m. Shabbat Service 7:00 p.m. | 11 |
| 12 Religious School 9:00 a.m. Adult Ed 10:00 a.m. | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 Shabbat Service 10:00 a.m. |
| 19 Religious School 9:00 a.m. | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | | | |

2012

Yahrzeits

| January 2011 | | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Date | Loved One | Member's Name | Relationship |
| 1/1 | Alex Passen | Sidney Hirschberg | Father-in-law |
| 1/1 | Bertha Homsky | Member | Member |
| 1/2 | Goldie Levin | Member | Member |
| 1/2 | Max Zolkowitz | Member | Member |
| 1/5 | Manfred Friedman | Claire Round | Brother |
| 1/6 | Mrs. Yocha Pump | Member | Member |
| 1/7 | Samuel Urdan | Member | Member |
| 1/8 | Morey P. Horwitz | Member | Member |
| 1/8 | Louis Wolf Liebenson | Member | Member |
| 1/9 | May Yablon | Stuart Yablon | Mother |
| 1/10 | Irving Keshner | Helene Yablon | Father |
| 1/14 | Sidney Dintenfass | Mark Dintenfass | Father |
| 1/17 | Ernest Gloyd | Sally Gloyd | Husband |
| 1/22 | Hilda Goldstein | Michelle Missner | Mother |
| 1/22 | Leonard Tegley | Paulette Glassheim | Grandfather |
| 1/23 | Rebecca Rakita | Member | Member |
| 1/24 | Carrie Busch | Member | Member |
| 1/24 | Harry Horwitz | Member | Member |
| 1/24 | Lewis Fufeld | Stephen Fufield | Father |
| 1/26 | Esther Gorwitz Palmer | Member | Member |
| 1/26 | Elsie Fritz Schulman | Phyllis Dintenfass | Mother |
| 1/28 | Dorothy Freschl | Stephen Freschl | Wife |

| February 2011 | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Date | Loved One | Member's Name | Relationship |
| 2/1 | Morris Segal | Member | Member |
| 2/1 | Joseph Jacob | Member | Member |
| 2/2 | Si Slafsky | Member | Member |
| 2/2 | Carl Blum | Dr. Marc Blum | Grandfather |
| 2/3 | Ida Berman Zuckerman | Member | Member |
| 2/9 | Lucille Lipschutz | Jeff Lipschutz | Mother |
| 2/10 | Dr. Harry Friedman | Ken Friedman | Father |
| 2/10 | Edith Feldstein | Brian Schreiber | Stepmother |
| 2/15 | Ralph Leslie Shapiro | Dr. Marc Blum | Uncle |
| 2/16 | Anna Kagan | Member | Member |
| 2/17 | David Balkansky | Member | Member |
| 2/18 | Samuel Balkansky | Member | Member |
| 2/18 | Esther Deitch | Jeffrey Glassheim | Grandmother |
| 2/19 | Max Cooper | Member | Member |
| 2/20 | David Leibenson | Member | Member |
| 2/21 | Sam Pachefsky | Sandy Ansfield | Father |
| 2/21 | Gertrude Neuman Brown | Lisa Weiner | Mother |
| 2/23 | Robert Gordon | Baylee Gordon | Husband |
| 2/23 | Ben I. Louis | Lowell Louis | Father |
| 2/26 | Benjamin Kline | Member | Member |
| 2/26 | Bette Finkler | Marty Finkler | Mother |
| 2/29 | Jodi Lynn Sigman | Bob and Char Sigman | Daughter |