



Chadashot Ha'am

June 2011

Sivan

President's Message - Lisa Pierce

It's an honor...

Six years or so ago, I was on my tiptoes in the hallway on a Sunday morning, hanging chalk drawings that the fifth grade class had made. Rabbi Alice walked by, stopped, turned to me and asked, "Why aren't you on the Board? Would you serve if you were asked?" I said, "It would be an honor." Then Jane walked by, and the rabbi said, "Hey, listen to this!" and asked me to repeat what I had just said: "It would be an honor."

I didn't understand then what I know now about synagogue leadership. But I had been attending services fairly often and teaching in our religious school. And I had a sense that maybe I could help out with my time in ways that would balance my limited financial contributions. So I closed my eyes and jumped right in.

In the years since, I have attended countless meetings, taken and made hundreds of phone calls, emailed way past my bedtime on a regular basis - and, along with seventeen other loyal congregants on the Board - shouldered the responsibility of keeping Bet Ha'am running to the best of our ability through a roller coaster of amazing highs and tragic lows. It can be a heavy burden. When I was asked if I would serve as Bet Ha'am's next president, I confess I was not sure I wanted to do it.

In the midst of considering this, I was musing about the nomination with someone who had an unexpected reaction. "Wow!" he said, "What an honor! You deserve it - congratulations!" Kind words, but at that moment I thought to myself, "Deserve?



Really? Who is crazy enough to want this kind of responsibility?" As I thanked him and walked away, I was struck by the word "honor" and the trust that it implies.

I thought of all the services and classes and events I have attended over the years at Bet Ha'am, all the good people I have come to know and the great friends I have made. I

have learned about so much more than just leadership from you. I see all of the time, effort, care, and thoughtfulness that everyone brings to this community - and I am awed. We are truly a "house of the people." Each of you is an integral part of what makes this community so special, and the positive energy we create together is palpable. If I can help, it is an honor to be able to continue to serve this wonderful congregation. And I am delighted to be able to do so with the support of a very talented group of board members and committee chairs.

We have some big tasks ahead of us as we welcome Rabbi Saks and begin the work of building a new relationship together. The important work we did together as a congregation at our focus groups this past year will drive the direction of our Board in leading our community forward. We will need to work together as a congregation to address the issues raised regarding our finances, the education we provide for our children and ourselves, and the opportunities we create for community involvement. In the process, we need to do our best to open the doors of our sanctuary and our hearts as wide as we can to all members of our congregational family and to the greater community.

As we make our way through the next couple of years together, please do contact me with any questions, suggestions, concerns, or offers of assistance. I can be reached most easily by email at lisapie@maine.rr.com or by phone at 797-0277 or in person at most Bet Ha'am services and events. I am happy to help. It will be an honor.

Chadashot Chai-lights

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Dates to Remember

Tuesday, June 7

Confirmation 6:30 PM

Friday, June 24

Dinner for Rabbi Sam
6:00 PM

Join us for these events!

Congregation Bet Ha'am

81 Westbrook Street
 South Portland, Maine 04106
 Phone (207) 879-0028
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 TTY available
www.bethaam.org

Interim Rabbi Sam Seicol

Orly Mendelson Biggie, Religious School Director
 Pam Denuite, Synagogue Administrator
 Teri Berenson, Bookkeeper
 Chris Skidgel, Custodian

Executive Committee

Lisa Pierce, President
 Lisa Munderback, Vice President
 Tom Rosen, Treasurer
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 Howard Glass
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 Jane Snerson
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 Nathan Szanton
 Deborah Tillman Stone
 Joanne Turnbull

Office Hours:

Tuesday - Friday, 9:00 AM-4:00 PM
 The office is closed on Mondays.
 Building Use: All meetings, events or gatherings
 must be scheduled with the office.

Office extensions and email addresses:

Orly Biggie, Religious School Director, Ext. 102
orly@bethaam.org
 Pam Denuite,
 Synagogue Administrator, Ext. 104
pam@bethaam.org
 Teri Berenson, Bookkeeper, Ext. 103
teri@bethaam.org
office@bethaam.org

Rabbi's Message - Rabbi Sam Seicol

As I write this article, I do not yet know where I will be in the coming year. By the time you read this, I hope that I will. I know I will be providing High Holy Day services and working at times with the students at Emerson College. I also know I will be teaching some groups of Bridge students. Such is the professional life I accepted when I retired from full-time rabbinic service.

This is not only my world but also the nature of transitions in life. Unlike the creation of long-term and evolving relationships, which we often hope for and are more comfortable with, much in life is transitory and yet deeply fulfilling and meaningful. People come and go in our lives. Some touch us deeply and are an ongoing part of us for a significant period of time. Others touch us equally deeply but for a fleeting moment in the span of our years. Still others continue in a more superficial connection, whether for a short or long time, or as a connection on Facebook.

Whatever the level of connection to another person, Jewish tradition teaches us that we greet each person with "*Shalom*" and we depart with the same word. Thus the word has often been taught to mean hello and goodbye. Often we expand this simple translation of "*shalom*" to mean peace.

However, the word "*shalom*" does not actually mean peace. "*Shalom*" is not merely the absence of strife and enmity. It includes the concepts of much more: a well-being of spirit, a wholeness and sense of fulfillment in life, and a feeling of balance and deep satisfaction in relationships. "*Shalom*, it is good to meet/see you," when meeting or reuniting means, "May the time we spend together lead us to an enhanced sense of uplifting in our lives. May I find blessing in knowing you and you in me." The parallel use of "*shalom*" on separating carries the wish that I have been a blessing for you and you for me and the wish that there may be times again that we will say "*shalom*" as a greeting for further mutual enhancement and joy.

As we come to the end of June and say the "*shalom*" of departure to one another, let us seek to celebrate those blessings we have brought to each other. Each of you at Bet Ha'am has become a part of me in some way and you will go with me no matter where I go next. At the end of June, then, our words to each other will not be, "Goodbye, I will miss you!" Our words will be, "*Shalom*, I am glad you have been a part of me. You will always be in me and with me as I travel a path of life that seeks more *shalom*."

In the beginning of July, you and Rabbi Saks will greet each other with, "*Shalom* - how can we build more *shalom* in our years together?"

Let us learn not to say "hello" or "goodbye." Instead, in life's transitions may we always offer wishes for *shalom*.

Thank you for our time together - *shalom*,

Rabbi Sam Seicol

From the Religious School Director

Orly Mendelson Biggie



In the early 1800s in Germany, the Reform movement instituted the ceremony of confirmation based on the belief that a sixteen year-old is more ready than a thirteen year-old to affirm his Jewish identity. In 1846 Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise officiated at the first confirmation service in the United States in Albany, New York. By the end of the 19th

century, the ceremony had become widespread in Reform communities. At first, confirmation was an alternative ceremony to *bar mitzvah*. In the 1970s, an increasing number of previously Orthodox and Conservative Jews, who wanted their sons and daughters to become *bar/bat mitzvah*, joined Reform congregations. And the *bar/bat mitzvah* ceremony was adopted by many congregations.

Reform leaders drew a parallel between the Jewish people's acceptance of the *Torah* at Mount Sinai and the students' acceptance of the role of Judaism in their lives. Thus it became customary to hold the confirmation ceremonies on *Shavuot*, the holiday that commemorates the anniversary of receiving the *Torah*.

Shavuot is celebrated on the sixth day of the Jewish month of *Sivan*, exactly seven weeks after *Pesach*. *Shavuot* eve will be Tuesday, June 7, and our 10th grade confirmation will be part of our *Shavuot* service. This service is a wonderful opportunity to support our youth and celebrate an important holiday.

Please see the invitation in this issue of *Chadashot* to join our students in celebrating their confirmation on June 7 at 6:30 PM.

Happy *Shavuot* everyone!

Religious School News

Thank you

Thank you to last month's substitute teachers: Sarah Szanton, Julie Russem.

School registration

Registration for the 2011-2012 school year is underway. Please be sure to register early. If you have children who will be new to the school, please call Orly to make an appointment. If you need more information about our Religious School, please call Orly at 879-0028.

Thank you for our Teacher Appreciation Luncheon

Thank you to Kerri Berman and Suzie Berzins for chairing and organizing our annual Teachers' Appreciation Luncheon. Thank you to all of our parents who contributed food for the luncheon.

Teachers are needed!

We need teachers for both our morning and evening schools. Please call Orly at 879-0028 for more information and to see how you can help.

Schedule of Services

Friday, June 3

Kabbalat Shabbat Service 7:30 PM

Saturday, June 4

Torah Study 9:00 AM
 Worship Service 10:00 AM
 Sydney Mogul-Campbell, daughter of
 Jennifer Mogul & John Campbell
Parsha Nasso

Tuesday, June 7

Shavuot Service/Confirmation 6:30 PM

Friday, June 10

Family Kabbalat Shabbat 6:30 PM

Saturday, June 11

Torah Study 9:00 AM
 Worship Service 10:00 AM
 Greg Levinsky, son of
 Ken & Nancy Levinsky
Parsha Beha'alotcha

Friday, June 17

Kabbalat Shabbat Service 7:30 PM

Saturday, June 18

Torah Study 9:00 AM
 Worship Service 10:00 AM
 Matthew Fishbein, son of
 Dan Fishbein & Ilene Schuchman
Parsha Sh'lach

Friday, June 24

Kabbalat Shabbat Service 7:30 PM

Saturday, June 25

Torah Study 9:00 AM
 Worship Service 10:00 AM
Parsha Korach

**Please join the congregation
 in celebration as our students
 are called to the Torah as
 B'nai Mitzvah.**

Book Group

The Bet Ha'am book group will be discussing *The Jew Store: A family memoir*, by Stella Suberman on Sunday, June 26, at 4:00 PM at the home of Jamie and Lee Broder in Cumberland Foreside.

We will not meet in July and August.

Social Action News

Please Fill Out the Social Action Survey!

The Social Action Committee wants to know your priorities for future social action projects. Please take a short survey online at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/T7RZR5> by June 15.

You can get paper copies of the survey at the synagogue office. Please complete and return paper surveys to the office by June 15.

We invite you to visit our blog to find our latest news.

<http://bhsocialaction.blogspot.com>

Volunteers Needed to Feed the Hungry

For many years, Bet Ha'am members have volunteered with the Wayside Food Program to cook and serve dinner one night every month. This is a simple and direct way to make a difference in our community by feeding the hungry.

After a year's hiatus due to changes in the program, we have resumed our monthly commitment. We now are serving dinner every fourth Thursday of the month at Woodford's Congregational Church in Portland.

We need more volunteers for this family-friendly activity. Children ages seven and up are invited to participate. If you can help, please arrive at Woodford's at 5:00 PM. We finish at about 7:00 PM.

You also can help with mobile pantries serving areas in Portland that do not have food pantries. There are two opportunities in that program: (1) Packing food items into boxes for distribution and (2) Going out on distribution runs to deliver the food. If there is enough interest in mobile pantries, we can be assigned times as a Bet Ha'am group.

Please contact Molly Bergman Quaid at mquaid@gmail.com for more information about both opportunities and to sign up to participate!

Congregation Bet Ha'am
invites you to share in the celebration of
the
Confirmation of

Felicia Jean Bridges
Daniel Aaron Epstein
Max Kirshbaum Christian
Jackson H. Berman
Brianna E. M. Greenblatt
Josephine E. Gardner
Caroline Stankard Levy
Aaron M. Ravin
Samantha M. Welch

during the Shavuot service on Tuesday, June 7, 2011, at 6:30 PM
Oneg Shavuot to follow

Welcome New Member

We welcome Brad Fox as a new member of our congregational family.

Mazel Tov

Oliver Watts recently won third place in the state-wide Corner Stones of Science contest. He was recognized for his review of a book about volcanoes. Corner Stones' mission is to connect children, teens, and adults to science and technology through superb books, programs, and opportunities for community involvement in current scientific issues.

Hospitality

For the comfort and enjoyment of all, please avoid wearing perfumed health and beauty aids to Bet Ha'am events. Some of our members are allergic to the scents.

Missing something? Check the closets near the bathrooms if you are missing items such as coats, hats or gloves. Valuable items such as glasses or jewelry are kept in the office.

If anyone needs transportation to attend services, please call the office (879-0028) and our Caring Committee will be happy to arrange a ride for you.

**WE SAY THANK YOU AND FAREWELL TO
RABBI SAM SEICOL
AT A POTLUCK DINNER
FRIDAY, JUNE 24, at 6:00 PM**

Rabbi Seicol's last weekend as our Interim Rabbi will begin on June 24. We want to celebrate his time with us and say thank you in Bet Ha'am style with a potluck dinner before Shabbat services on Friday evening. Rabbi Seicol particularly enjoys chicken wings, Thai food and Chinese food. He cannot eat dishes with oranges, tangerines or olives. Please keep his food preferences in mind as you decide what to contribute to the potluck dinner.

What will you bring? Chicken wings _____
 Vegetarian main dish _____
 Side dish & dessert _____
 Meat dish _____
 Salad _____
 Drinks & dessert _____
 Thai or Chinese dish _____

Please do not bring dishes with pork or shellfish or mix milk and meat in the same dish.
 RSVP to the office: 879-0028 by Wednesday, June 22, with what food items you bring.

Can't come to the potluck dinner? Join us for services at 7:30 PM on Friday and/or 10:00 AM on Saturday to express your thanks to Rabbi Seicol!

Plans for our transition to our new rabbi

The transition team is planning many events and gatherings to welcome Rabbi Saks and his partner, Kirk Boettcher, at the beginning of July. Rabbi Saks will be in the office beginning Tuesday, July 5, and will lead services beginning on July 8.

Neighborhood meet-the-rabbi get-togethers are being scheduled from July 10 through the summer. Lee Broder and Emily Brocks are coordinating these gatherings. We have had many volunteers so far! If you live in Scarborough, Falmouth, Gorham, Windham or Cape Elizabeth and would like to host a get-together, please contact Lee at lee.broder@aol.com.

Stay tuned for more information about other events over the summer and fall – including the First Annual (or First-in-a-Long-Time) Bet Ha'am Summer Picnic, a beachfront *havdalah*, and a bowling night. There will be plenty of opportunities to meet and get to know Rabbi Saks, including *Shabbat* worship services, adult education classes and meetings with each committee and religious school grade level.

Rabbi Saks will also be working with *b'nai mitzvah* students and families, meeting with our religious school teachers, and meeting with lay leaders and office staff to ensure the smoothest possible transition and introduction to our community.

If you have any questions or comments about the rabbi transition process, please contact Lisa Pierce at lispie@maine.rr.com.

Garden Notes - Toby Rosenberg

You might think that the Garden Committee would take a short rest between our Mystery of Matzah weekend and the beginning of the spring garden season, but that's just not our style. Joanie Caldwell and Toby Rosenberg wrote and were awarded a \$500 mini-grant from Healthy Rivers HMP/ Communities Promoting Health (PROP) to support our raised bed project. We have used some of the funds for garden materials and will also develop curriculum materials to incorporate garden lessons into our religious school program.

Many thanks to the Moser Kittle family and Shai Levite who sponsored the spring mulching of our interior garden. What a luxury it was to stand at the sanctuary door and watch young, strong professionals do labor that so taxed our backs last spring. We will use the energy we saved to plant blue hydrangea and strawberry plants that we got at our annual plant sale.

Our Big Garden Day, chaired by Beth Simpson and Joanie Caldwell, was a big success on a rainy May 15. We raised \$1,168 from the sale of beautiful, donated plants. Someone even got a fabulous deal on a Japanese Maple! Thanks to Julia Bailin who photographed the day's activities, and *today rabbah* to all who helped make our many accomplishments possible.

Our volunteers included: David Caldwell, Jane Weinstein, Gail Kass, Shai Levite, Julia and Dan Bailin, Marilyn Sherry, Susan Cummings Lawrence, Toby Rosenberg and new member, Brad Fox. Thanks to all those who donated plants, including: Beth Simpson & Annette Lemek, Susan Cummings Lawrence, Toby Rosenberg, Jane Weinstein, the Horowitz Kass family, Layne Gregory, Shai Levite, Lauren Lehman, Rachel Stamieszkin and the Epstein family. If you donated plants and we missed your name, please contact tobyr@awi.net so I can thank you properly. And thanks to all those who bought plants and made this year's sale even more profitable than last year's.

On that same rainy day, we also planted our wheat patch with several different varieties that include Emer, Einkorn, Jerusalem, Siberian Spring, Purple Barley and Glenn. Our fifth graders, Sophie Frantz, Ella Novick, Jonah Peterson, Elias Ruffner, Jonathan Stanley, Ella Stillman and Emma Tabenken did the planting,

supervised by Shai Levite, Dan Bailin and Brad Fox. They were even careful to label each type. Take a look under the fire escape as you come into our parking lot, and you will see our wheat as it grows! Wheat planting is a continuation of our Sowing Seeds Braiding Community program, funded by a URJ incubator grant.

Lunch and snacks were made available for all volunteers through the generosity of the Epstein family, Standard Baking Company and Panera. Thanks to Greg Levinsky and Oliver Watts for laying out a beautiful lunch spread and helping in so many ways that day.

Last year's plant sale profits funded the creation of our raised bed garden on May 15. Led by three members of Cultivating Community, Craig Lapine, Nora Saks and Ryan Green, the intrepid, early crew built three 18" high beds. They filled them lasagna-style, with layers of compostable material from our own piles and topped them off with rich, organic soil. The early crew included Russ and Josie Pierce, Alison Noiles, Dan, Henry & Charlie Noiles Gardner, Jacob Fogel, Stu and Louise Abramson, Brad Fox, Shai Levite and Toby Rosenberg.

At four o'clock our seventh graders and families arrived to plant the beds with seedlings and seeds. One bed is filled with herbs we can use for cooking or *havdalah* spices. Two larger beds hold squash, beans, tomatoes, peppers, lettuce/greens, potatoes, pumpkins, cucumbers, nasturtiums and more. It was wet and muddy but our volunteers dove in energetically to make speedy work of the planting. Thanks to Carly Farber, Rose Horowitz, Vera Gardner, Sarah Novick, Oliver Watts, Matthew Fishbein, Max Abramson, Sam Carignan, Michael Michaelson, Greg Levinsky, Maya Kosak, Josie Pierce, Heidi Farber, Susan Horowitz, Louise Abramson, Jennifer Kosak, Dan Fishbein and Kate Sullivan. The seventh grade families will do most of the care and tending of the raised beds throughout the summer. Please contact tobyr@awi.net if you are interested in helping.

Adult Education News

The Adult Education Committee would like to thank everyone who participated in the Passover Workshop in April. Our leaders, Steve Steinbock, Shoshana Hoose, Nancy Levinsky, Gail Wartell, Dr. Stephen Simons, and Rabbi Seicol, generously shared their knowledge and talents. Twenty participants enjoyed a Sunday afternoon and learned about Passover topics as diverse as text study, music, and sign language while also eating and schmoozing. It was a great way to prepare for the holiday!

As summertime rapidly approaches, the Adult Education Committee is already planning for next year and needs your help. We hope you will fill out the survey that will be available at the synagogue. Thanks!

Join the Bet Ha'am Donor Gallery

We invite you to join the Bet Ha'am Donor Gallery today! We have many needs and many ways for you to contribute. If you have an event you would like to celebrate, a person you would like to honor, a *yahrzeit* to remember, or you just want to help support our programs, please fill out the form and send it along with your check to Bet Ha'am. Include an address if you would like an acknowledgement to be sent.

Our Donor Gallery listing should read:

Please acknowledge to: _____

Your name: _____

Check enclosed for \$ _____

Fund choice (please check one):

- General Fund
 Sandmel Education Fund
 Building Capital Campaign
 Berkowitz Open Door Fund
 Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
 Youth Fund
 Cohen Fund for Worship & Learning
 Religious School Library Fund
 Adult Library Fund
 Rosalyn S. & Sumner T. Bernstein
 Scholar in Residence Fund
 Bikur Cholim (hospital chaplaincy)
 Tutor Fund

Bet Ha'am Donor Gallery

We thank our generous contributors

Capital Campaign

- In memory of Lee Broder's aunt, Diane Ravitch, by **Karen & Alan Lukas**
- In honor of Jane Snerson on Mother's Day by **Margot, Eric, Adam & Rachael**
- In honor of Julia & Dan Vailin's new home by **Laura Kittle & Jeremy Moser**
- In honor of Aaron Geller becoming Bar Mitzvah by **Laura Kittle & Jeremy Moser**
- In honor of Rachel Epstein becoming Bat Mitzvah by **Laura Kittle & Jeremy Moser**
- In honor of Max Abramson becoming Bar Mitzvah by **Laura Kittle & Jeremy Moser**
- In honor of Vera Gardner becoming Bat Mitzvah by **Laura Kittle & Jeremy Moser**

Religious School Library Fund

- In honor of Vera Gardner becoming Bat Mitzvah by **Pam Weiss & Ken Lemieux**

Tutor Fund

- In honor of Ellie Miller by **Andrew Michaelson & Kate Sullivan**

General Fund

- For a quick and permanent recovery for Joanne Turnbull by **H. Michael Alpren**
- In appreciation of Toby Rosenberg for the wonderful scholar weekend by **Valerie & Robert Greenberg**
- In appreciation by **Solomon & Janet Yusim**
- In memory of Joel Polisner on his *yahrzeit* by **Duane & Evie Polisner**
- In appreciation by **Michael Girard**
- In appreciation by **Crystal Canney & James Linsky**
- In memory of sisters, Birdie and Jeanette, and mother, Fannie, on their *yahrzeits* by **Carl Lerman**
- In memory of Lena Rickless on her *yahrzeit* by **Wendy & Bill Sirois**

Zecher T'zaddik L'vrachah

- Condolences to Lee & Jamie Broder on the loss of Lee's aunt, Diane Lee Mandell Ravitch.

JUNE 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3 <i>Kabbalat Shabbat</i> Service 7:30 PM	4 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM <i>Sydney Mogul-Campbell</i> <i>Bar Mitzvah</i>
5 JCA Annual Meeting 9:00-11:00 AM Pizza Fundraiser 4:30-6:30 PM	6	7 Shavuot and Confirmation Service 6:30 PM	8 Office closed	9	10 Family <i>Kabbalat</i> <i>Shabbat</i> Service 6:30 PM	11 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM <i>Greg Levinsky</i> <i>Bar Mitzvah</i>
12	13	14	15	16	17 <i>Kabbalat Shabbat</i> Service 7:30 PM	18 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM <i>Matthew Fishbein</i> <i>Bar Mitzvah</i>
19	20	21	22	23 Serve dinner at Woodford's Congregational Church 5:00 PM	24 <i>Potluck Dinner for</i> <i>Rabbi Sam</i> 6:00 PM <i>Kabbalat Shabbat</i> Service 7:30 PM	25 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM
26 Book Group Meeting 4:00 PM Board of Trustees Meeting 6:30 PM	27	28	29	30		