



# Chadashot Ha'am

April 2013

Nisan/Iyar

## A Message from Rabbi Saks

I spent my final summer in college studying abroad in Costa Rica. Before heading to Costa Rica, I learned that San Jose had a small Reform congregation that had been in existence for about thirteen years. As I was settling into life with my host mother, Noemi, I asked for her assistance in locating the synagogue. The only contact information I had was a post office box address. As a Jehovah's Witness, Noemi understood what it meant to be a religious minority in a Catholic country and got to work trying to locate the Reform congregation for me. She called the only Jewish woman she knew, a member of San Jose's Orthodox congregation, who told Noemi to send me to the Orthodox synagogue instead, because the Reform synagogue wasn't real Judaism. I remember Noemi's reaction and can still hear her voice saying, "There are so few Jews in the world. Why can't you all get along?"

Noemi had a great point. Within our tradition is the notion of *k'lal Yisrael*, the wholeness of the Jewish community. The rabbis teach us *kol Yisrael arevim zeh ba-zeh*, the entire Jewish community is responsible for one another. Still, it often seems that we face conflict within the Jewish community. We disagree about



which movement's practice is more legitimate or more relevant.

When we don't see eye to eye, it damages the entire Jewish community. While our ritual differences and varying levels of observance can sometimes serve as obstacles in our relationships with members of different branches of the Jewish community, these differences can also serve as opportunities for dialogue and for strengthening the

Jewish community. I was recently approached by Rabbi Carolyn Braun of Temple Beth El and Rabbi Akiva Herzfeld of Congregation Shaarey Tphiloh after a member of the Jewish community expressed interest in a community *minyan* or weekday worship service. We quickly realized that the differences in our communities' religious practices may serve as barriers to such an endeavor. In order to explore the possibility, we felt we would need to start by talking about the similarities and differences. We reached out to Gary Berenson of Etz Chaim Synagogue and Rabbi Moshe Wilansky of Chabad to plan a community dialogue around issues on which our communities may not always see eye to eye.

Our program, *Eat, Pray, Love: A Community Conversation around Food, Worship, and Sex & Sexuality*, will be held in April and May in various locations in the

Jewish community. I will join the other spiritual leaders of our community's congregations in an open and honest dialogue about our personal beliefs and our community's understandings on these issues, helping to model civil discourse in an effort to create a greater sense of *k'lal Yisrael*, the wholeness of the Jewish community. I hope you will join us:

*Eat*: Tuesday, April 9, 7:00-9:00 PM at Temple Beth El

*Pray*: Thursday, April 27, 7:00-9:00 PM at Etz Chaim Synagogue

*Love*: Tuesday, May 7, 7:00-9:00 PM at Congregation Bet Ha'am

### Chadashot Chai-lights

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## President's Message - Lisa Pierce

As I'm writing this, Passover is fast approaching. I have been spending a lot of time this week reworking our family's *Haggadah* in preparation. Over the past several years, we've used more or less the same version I threw together when our kids were small. This year, I realized rather belatedly that most of the kids who will be at my house are in high school and can handle a little more depth.

Never one to do things halfway, I've found myself taking a Reform approach – learning about different parts of the seder by consulting a variety of sources online, in print, and in person, and then choosing or crafting the words that make the most sense to me. What I've found in my travels is fascinating. Within this most ritualized of all Jewish festivals, there is a vast range of practice. Traditional voices say with certainty that each part of the seder must happen in a particular way. But everywhere I turn, others have tweaked, modified, added and turned tradition on its head – and with such a reverence for the underlying essence of it all that at times even the craziest things seem to sing with the resonance of history.

It's been liberating to me as I weed through the voices in my head that wonder, "Will this kid find meaning in that text?" and "What will the grandparents think if we do this instead?" and "Can we



do justice to this passage without going on too long?" By the time you are reading this newsletter, I will finally be getting the last of the *matzah* crumbs out of the cracks in my dining table and making notes about things I want to change and add to our Passover seder for next year. In the meantime, I hope you all found liberation in your own Exodus, and that the season ahead is filled with renewal and joy.

As spring approaches, our garden volunteers will be kicking into high gear, our grounds will be filled with gorgeous colors and our calendar will be packed with exciting opportunities for study and play. Please watch your weekly emails for details about these upcoming events: a weekend with Dr. Mark Washofsky, this year's Bernstein Scholar-in-Residence, on April 26-28, a Bet Ha'am Bowling Night, a Shabbat in Your Neighborhood event, our annual Teacher Recognition, and more.

### Congregation Bet Ha'am

81 Westbrook Street  
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Phone (207) 879-0028  
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TTY available  
www.bethaam.org

### Rabbi Jared Saks

Orly Mendelson Biggie, Religious School Director  
Kris Dorer, Synagogue Administrator  
Teri Berenson, Bookkeeper  
Karen Hindall, Administrative Assistant  
Chris Skidgel, Custodian

### Executive Committee

Lisa Pierce, President  
Lisa Munderback, Vice President  
Tom Rosen, Treasurer  
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### Board of Directors

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Nathan Szanton  
Deborah Tillman Stone

### 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:

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## From the Religious School Director

Orly Mendelson Biggie



Another school year is progressing very quickly. Throughout the year we have encouraged parents to be active participants in our many wonderful programs. Each grade has had family programs in which the parents were either the learners or teachers, or both. I would like to share some of the latest programs along with some photos.

In January, the first graders created a beautiful Jewish museum. The students brought special Jewish items from home and, with the help of teachers Martha Ollove and Elise Richer, made a great display. Parents were invited to the Grand Visit as students introduced their treasures, explaining why they were so special to them.

The last session of the second grade Family Connection was about God. After studying with Rabbi Saks for part of the morning, parents joined their second grader to explore the program stations together. At each station, different stories and materials relating to God could be discussed at their own level.

The fifth graders and their parents became residents of the *shtetl* with identities and jobs. We had a rabbi and his family, a matchmaker, a butcher, a farmer and other community figures. We also had Cosaks, who were there to harm and disrupt the lives of the Jews. We all laughed, cried and came away with a better understanding of *shtetl* life.

Looking ahead, I would like to encourage interested parents to visit our classrooms. Our teachers love to share their lessons with you. It is not a secret that we are always looking for new teachers. Visiting the classroom can help to give you an idea of what teaching in our wonderful school is all about!



Photographs from the 5th grade *Shtetl* program

More photographs of these activities are on page 4.

## First Grade Program



## Second Grade Program



## Religious School News

### Grades 7-10

On April 28, parents of students in grades seven through ten are invited to join their children for a special session with our Bernstein Scholar-in-Residence, Dr. Mark Washofsky, who will speak on, "When Two Persons are Drowning, Which One Do You Save? – Jewish Law and the Allocation of Scarce Medical Resources." This session will take place at our usual class time 5:30-7:30 PM. Parents are invited to join us for dinner at 5:00 PM. Please RSVP by Wednesday, April 24.

### Karen Lukas is our *Tikun Olam* Honoree

We honored Karen Lukas as our *Tikun Olam* God's Hero at a recent morning assembly. Karen made 66 beautiful quilts and donated them to the children at Brit's Orphanage in Haiti. Karen spoke with our students about her project and about the orphanage dedicated to the memory of Brittney Gengel, who was killed in the earthquake there.

### Thank You

Thank you to Sam Welch for helping in our second grade class.



**Schedule of Services**

**Friday, April 5**

*Kabbalat Shabbat Service* 7:30 PM

**Saturday, April 6**

Torah Study 9:00 AM  
 Worship Service 10:00 AM  
*Parsha Sh'mini*

**Friday, April 12**

*Family Kabbalat Shabbat* 6:30 PM

**Saturday, April 13**

Torah Study 9:00 AM  
 Worship Service 10:00 AM  
*Parsha Tazria/M'tzora*

**Friday, April 19**

*Kabbalat Shabbat Service* 7:30 PM

**Saturday, April 20**

Torah Study 9:00 AM  
 Worship Service 10:00 AM  
*Parsha Acharei Mot/K'doshim*

**Friday, April 26**

*Kabbalat Shabbat Service* 7:30 PM  
 Bernstein Scholar-in-Residence Program

**Saturday, April 27**

Torah Study 9:00 AM  
 Worship Service 10:00 AM  
*Parsha Emor*  
 Bernstein Scholar-in-Residence Program

**Please join the congregation in celebration of Shabbat each week.**

**Shabbat in the Neighborhood: Turn Friday Night into Shabbat**

The Membership Committee is planning a wonderful congregation-wide evening on Friday, June 7, and we'd like to ask for your help. We are encouraging members of our congregation to host informal, potluck *Shabbat* dinners in their homes for members who live nearby. We hope to have many *Shabbat* dinners happening simultaneously in homes all around southern Maine. This promises to be a warm and wonderful way for congregants to become better acquainted and have fun.

There will be two formats for the evening: *Shabbat* Dinner plus Services (everyone goes to Bet Ha'am for services following the meal) or, simply *Shabbat* Dinner. The host chooses which format he or she would like, and timing of the dinner may be earlier for those who plan to attend services.

Please consider volunteering. This is a lovely way to contribute to our spirit of community, meet new people, and have fun! If you would like to volunteer to host, please fill out the form below or contact Karen Hindall at the office, 879-0028 or karen@bethaam.org , by April 26.

If you're not able to host and would like to participate in Shabbat in the Neighborhood, that's great too. Please fill out the form below and return it to the office by May 24.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Shabbat in the Neighborhood – Friday evening, June 7**

\_\_\_ I/we can host up to \_\_\_\_\_ guests in our home.

\_\_\_ I/we would like to bring a potluck dish and participate at someone else's home.

Name(s):

Phone and/or email address:

Town or city where you live:

Number of participants:

Other considerations:

## Thank You to our Gala Event Sponsors and Host Committee

### Sponsors

Kate & Sam Hirsh  
 Jeremy Moser & Laura Kittle  
 Sarah & Nathan Szanton

### Host Committee

Louise & Stuart Abramson  
 Julia & Dan Bailin  
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 Blaine & Jennifer Riggle  
 Elizabeth & Tom Rosen  
 Paul Rothman & Emily McEntee  
 Rabbi Jared Saks & Kirk Boettcher  
 Jane Snerson  
 David Soley  
 Mark & Deborah Tillman-Stone

**The Social Action Committee will meet on Sunday, April 7,  
 from 9:45 to 11:15 AM.**

### Going Green in 2013

In the spirit of encouraging environmentally sound practices at Bet Ha'am, the Social Action Committee is putting up new signs in the Social Hall to remind people to recycle their trash after Onegs and other events. We want to thank Lam Zimet, adjunct committee member, for making signs for these three categories: Recyclables, Returnables, and Trash (which includes food waste, plastic wrap and dirty napkins). We can drastically reduce our garbage - and carbon footprint - if you take a moment to properly dispose of your trash. The planet thanks you.

**Thursday  
Mini  
Series  
Beit Midrash**

March 21  
March 28  
and  
April 4  
7:00—9:00 PM  
Congregation Bet Ha'am

*Exploring Midrash*

Rebecca Wohl-Pollack

A Look at the Jewish  
Idea of Messiah from  
Daniel and Isaiah to  
Jesus and Bar Kochba

Ginger Spiro

**How to Write a  
D'Var Torah**

Rabbi Jared Saks

Choose one of the three-  
session courses listed.

7:00—Nosh & D'var Torah

7:30—Class begins



## Garden Notes - Toby Rosenberg

The March 17th Pruning workshop was a big success. More than a dozen people gathered by our sunny, southern windows as Lauren Lehman showed a variety of tools and gave very clear instruction on how, when and why to prune. Then the group headed out to the sanctuary garden for hands-on practice with the shrubs there. Participants left with confidence, and our shrubs looked great. Thanks to Lauren for a terrific workshop.

The next community outreach program will be a Seed Exchange on Sunday, April 28, at 11:00 AM. This is a great opportunity to trade extra seeds that are viable for the 2013 season for some varieties you may want to try. Or perhaps this is just the encouragement you need to be daring in your garden selections. Bring your seeds. We'll provide plastic zip lock bags and labels.

On Sunday, May 12, it will be both Mothers Day and our Annual Plant Sale. Now that the snow has melted, you can start looking at your garden and imagining what perennials you want to dig and donate. This annual sale supports our many garden programs and stewardship.



Congregants enjoyed our Passover workshop events in March, including the humorous seder debate, *charoses* tasting and forum discussions.



## 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):

- \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Fund
- \_\_\_\_\_ General Fund
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
- \_\_\_\_\_ Adult Library Fund
- \_\_\_\_\_ Berkowitz Open Door Fund
- \_\_\_\_\_ Building Capital Campaign
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cohen Fund for Worship & Learning
- \_\_\_\_\_ Goldfinger Fund for Israel Travel
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lehman Fund for Gardens & Grounds
- \_\_\_\_\_ Religious School Library Fund
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rosalyn S. & Sumner T. Bernstein  
Scholar in Residence Fund
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sandmel Education Fund
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tutor Fund
- \_\_\_\_\_ Youth Fund

### ***Bet Ha'am Donor Gallery***

#### **We thank our generous contributors**

##### **Annual Fund**

- Catherine Share
- Kyle Holmquist
- Lisa Munderback

##### **Capital Campaign**

- In loving memory of aunt, Diane Ravitch, by Lee & Jamie Broder
- In loving memory of cousin, Alan Ravitch, by Lee & Jamie Broder
- In loving memory of sister, Charlene Ravitch, by Lee & Jamie Broder
- In memory of Jules Rheaume on his *yahrzeit* by Louise & Stuart Abramson

##### **Rabbi's Discretionary Fund**

- In memory of Cecilia Saks by Richard & Norma Saks
- With gratitude to Rabbi Saks by Sharon Ash Tancredi

##### **General Fund**

- In appreciation by anonymous
- In appreciation of Steve Steinbock by the Berman family
- In memory of Cecilia Saks by Donald & Nancy Borth
- In memory of Cecilia Saks by Jeremy Moser & Laura Kittle
- In memory of Cecilia Saks by Joseph Voto
- In memory of Cecilia Saks by Robert & Kathryn Blannett
- In memory of Cecilia Saks by Rory Zamansky
- In memory of Cecilia Saks by Sarah & Nathan Szanton
- In memory of Lewis Rosenthal by Rona & Robert Rosenthal
- Mazel Tov* to John Cole by Robin & Chuck Foss and Elaine Miller

#### **Lehman Fund for Gardens & Grounds In honor of Ken Lehman**

- Lee & Jamie Broder
- Rush & Allison Brown
- Lance & Cathy Prichard
- Rabbi Jared Saks & Kirk Boettcher
- Anonymous
- Wilma Rose
- Peter Scott & Laurisa Semenuk
- Rachel & Piotr Stamieszkin
- Rosie Wohl

#### ***Zecher T'zaddik L'vrachah***

- Condolences to Andrew & Denise Mancall on the loss of Andrew's parents, Elliott & Jacqueline Mancall

# APRIL 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Office Closed	2	3 Morning <i>Minyan</i> 7:00 AM	4 1:00 PM Library volunteers 7:00 PM Adult Learning Mini- Series Session 3	5 <i>Kabbalat Shabbat</i> Service 7:30 PM	6 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM 6:00 PM Starry Night Gala
7 9:00-Noon Grades 1-6 Religious School 9:00 AM Kindergarten 9:45 AM Social Action Meeting 11:00 AM <i>Shalom Yeladim</i> 1:00 PM Community <i>Yom</i> <i>HaShoah</i> Commemoration 5:00 PM Grades 7-12 Religious School	8 Office Closed <i>Yom HaShoah</i> (Holocaust Remembrance Day)	9	10 Morning <i>Minyan</i> 7:00 AM	11 1:00 PM Library volunteers	12 Family <i>Kabbalat</i> <i>Shabbat</i> Service 6:30 PM	13 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM
14 No Religious School	15 Office Closed	16 <i>Yom</i> <i>Ha'atzmaut</i> (Israel Independence Day)	17 Morning <i>Minyan</i> 7:00 AM	18 1:00 PM Library volunteers and Library Committee Meeting	19 <i>Kabbalat Shabbat</i> Service 7:30 PM	20 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM
21 No Religious School	22 Office Closed	23 6:30 PM Strategic Planning Team Meeting	24 Morning <i>Minyan</i> 7:00 AM 6:30 PM Education Committee Meeting	25 1:00 PM Library volunteers	26 <i>Kabbalat Shabbat</i> Service 7:30 PM Bernstein Scholar- in-Residence Program	27 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM Bernstein Scholar- in-Residence Program
28 9:00-Noon Grades 1-6 Religious School 9:00 AM Kindergarten 5:00 PM Grades 7-10 Religious School, Bernstein Scholar-in- Residence Program (Parents invited)	29 Office Closed	30 6:30 PM Board Meeting				