



Chadashot Ha'am

July/August 2013

Tammuz/Av/Elul

A Message from Rabbi Saks

Before the train pulls out of Penn Station, a passenger asks the conductor to make sure he gets off the train in Huntington. He then closes his eyes for the hour's ride. At Stonybrook, half an hour past Huntington, the man, still on the train, realizes what has happened and gives the conductor a real tongue-lashing before disembarking. Another conductor sees the entire exchange and says to the first, "Wow, have you ever seen anyone so angry?" The first conductor replies, "Yep. The guy I just threw off the train in Huntington."



When it comes to change, it's not enough to say we tried. We want to make sure that we actually make things better. Many members of our congregation have been hard at work creating our Strategic Plan that will help us become a synagogue of the 21st century. We are looking at a very bright future together. At the core of our plan is who we have always been: Bet Ha'am, the house of the people. We will continue to be a warm, welcoming community with an open door, seeking to meet people wherever we are on our Jewish journeys.

The world around us is changing faster than we can keep up. Schools offer curricula that are more relevant, engaging and up-to-date than the programs of our childhood. The internet has exposed us to countless new ways to build community. Our Strategic Plan will empower us to respond to changes in the world, remain relevant and dynamic, and step into the next phase of our synagogue life successfully.

Social Justice:

When I was growing up, my Jewish experience was characterized by social action. My rabbi, Joel Soffin, is known in some Jewish circles as *the* social action rabbi. Every week, month or holiday, there was a new project to engage us in employing our Jewish values to make the world a better place. I knew how to be Jewish because I knew what social action was. The synagogue of the 21st century has the responsibility to do even more. Synagogues around the country, many in partnership with interfaith coalitions, have learned the profound and positive impact we can have when we lend a Jewish voice to the issues of our time. We stand on two feet when we do this work. One of those feet we can call *tzedakah*, the other, *tzedek*. Both have the same root, but each has a unique purpose. *Tzedakah* includes the acts of social action that are critical to meeting the needs of the vulnerable. *Tzedek*, which means justice, is lending our Jewish voice to the conversations about why there are vulnerable people in our world. Through Congregation-Based Community Organizing, we will mobilize the Bet Ha'am community around issues that matter to us, meeting the goals of both *tzedakah* and *tzedek*.

Worship:

The diversity of our religious traditions at Bet Ha'am, both Jewish and non-Jewish, has helped me to deepen my spiritual leadership skills. There are many for whom our worship at Bet Ha'am works and is meaningful. There are others who have

not yet found a connection to *Shabbat* worship.

Imagine this: Every so often on a *Shabbat* morning, we could simultaneously offer our typical *Shabbat* service in the sanctuary, a study session, and a Tot *Shabbat*. We might begin together with song and end together with *Kiddush*, *Motzi* and a *Shabbat* lunch. We could engage folks who do not usually participate in celebrating *Shabbat* while still offering what has worked so well for so many of us.

Lifelong Learning:

Students' schedules are more demanding than ever before and expectations are high. At the same time, Jewish education is also important. To remain relevant, the synagogue of the 21st century must balance all of these priorities that sometimes conflict. I am excited about the future of religious education at Bet Ha'am. We are exploring models that provide both the flexibility that students and families need and the integrity of the solid Jewish education that Bet Ha'am has always provided. Perhaps our program will include family retreats one weekend a month in winter so families could ski or have time together on the other weekends of winter months. The unstructured free time that is part of any retreat would allow us to get to know each other and build a stronger community. We would be able to foster intergenerational learning, both between adults and children and between children of various ages, that would create mentorship relationships and ensure continuity of Jewish tradition within the Bet Ha'am community.

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President's Message - Lisa Munderback

Ah, summer in Maine! Summer is in full swing and for the short time we have it, we need to make the most of it. Of course the older I get, the more quickly it seems to fly by. The same can be said of my term as vice-president under Lisa Pierce's phenomenal leadership. Where did those two years evaporate to? Thank goodness Lisa is still going to be involved on the Board, the Executive Committee and a myriad of other projects. I know that she will continue to be my mentor as I get my feet wet in this new position of president.

I am very excited that the Board has approved our Strategic Plan and we are beginning the implementation process. As a participant in the planning process, I became even more aware of all the great things that are happening at Bet Ha'am, including an awesome rabbi, fantastic administrative staff and dedicated volunteers who are creating some wonderful programming and keeping our grounds and facility looking beautiful. Our Strategic Plan will build on this strong foundation and take us to new levels of radical hospitality, social action and justice, life-long learning and worship.

I hope that you have had a chance to read the Strategic Plan or will do so soon. It is filled with ambitious yet attainable goals and action steps to keep us on track. I'm very excited to lead the congregation as we begin to implement the plan. I'm particularly excited about providing a variety of programming that will increase our



connection to each other as well as to the community around us. What excites you? To implement these great ideas we need your support. Let us know what excites you and how you'd like to be involved. We can use your help, whether it's for a couple of hours a week, one short-term commitment or an ongoing project.

The task force to look at our Religious School programming is one aspect of the Strategic Plan that is already underway. The task force is exploring how to incorporate flexibility and informal learning opportunities into a program that welcomes family participation and maintains the high standards for Jewish learning that we expect of ourselves at Bet Ha'am. If anyone would like to provide input or be involved in any way, please contact Lisa Pierce, who is chairing this initiative.

Another priority for this coming year is to reflect on and develop policy related to the participation of non-Jewish family members in congregational life, including governance and teaching. The Board will share a draft of a proposed policy for congregational comment before any vote is taken.

As I mentioned, we want to increase community connections and life-long learning opportunities through speakers, visiting scholars, artists and musicians. Your suggestions for resources that would enhance these goals are needed and welcomed.

I hope you will relax, enjoy the company of friends and family and stop by Bet Ha'am to say hello this summer. And I hope you will also consider how you can be involved in making Bet Ha'am an even better place. We will do great things when we all work together!

Chadashot Chai-lights

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Congregation Bet Ha'am

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

Executive Committee

Lisa Munderback, President
 Perry Newman, Vice President
 Ben Grant, Treasurer
 Nathan Szanton, Secretary
 Lisa Pierce, Past President

Board of Directors

Julia Bailin
 Emily Brocks
 David Butzel
 Mylan Cohen
 Howard Glass
 Andrew Kosak
 Karen Lukas
 Jeremy Moser
 Jane Snerson
 Steve Steinbock
 Lee Tabenken
 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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Holy Community:

Each of these opportunities and the numerous others supported by the Strategic Plan are about community building. At the core of everything is a deepening of our sense of connection with one other and with Bet Ha'am, including a sense of *radical hospitality* that becomes each of our responsibility. In May, Sharon Newman and I attended *Hava Nashira*, a songleaders' workshop. Throughout the weekend, numerous participants approached me asking how my *first Hava Nashira* was going. At first, I wasn't sure how they knew it was the first time I had attended. Later, I learned that the stickers on my nametag gave everyone this information. It was the responsibility of not only the faculty or group leaders, but of every participant to check in with one another and make sure we were doing well. I got the sense that the quality of my experience mattered to everyone. This felt amazing. I have seen many of you engage in that kind of welcoming at Bet Ha'am and I invite each of you to take on that role, making this holy place a place of radical hospitality, too.

The Strategic Planning Team and the Board feel that both the goals and actions items of the Plan are important and achievable. It may seem like a lot, but we'll do more than just try. We'll succeed. I'm looking forward to this journey together with you.

Garden Notes

The gardens have been spectacular - full of rich purples and pinks. Our new benches were an immediate hit. Guests and members alike have spent time relaxing on them, enjoying fresh air and sun-dappled water surrounded by abundant blooms.

Check out the long-blooming, blue-purple Rozanne geraniums and purple lavender recently planted along the sidewalk leading from the parking lot to the garden. Special thanks to Alice Peters for planting these flowers and the colorful nasturtiums near the library.

Beginning on June 25, the Garden Committee will meet each Tuesday at 5:30 PM to tend our raised beds. It is easy, enjoyable, exciting work and we all learn a lot about raised bed gardening. Come join us any Tuesday if it is not pouring rain.

Soon we will be harvesting and donating crops. Our wheat is showing beautiful green heads as it waves in the wind. We are counting the weeks until harvest of the rows of winter wheat planted in the fall.

The Garden Committee welcomes new member, Sue Howard, and bids a sad farewell to Julia Bailin as she joins the Marketing/Communications committee.

Schedule of Services

Friday, July 5

Kabbalat Shabbat Service 7:30 PM

Saturday, July 6

Torah Study 9:00 AM

Worship Service 10:00 AM

Sophie Frantz Bat Mitzvah,
daughter of Stephan Frantz &
Susan Lieberman
Parsha Matot

Friday, July 12

Family Kabbalat Shabbat at
Fort Williams Park 5:00 PM

Saturday, July 13

Torah Study 9:00 AM

Worship Service 10:00 AM

Parsha D'varim

Friday, July 19

Kabbalat Shabbat Service 7:30 PM

Saturday, July 20

Torah Study 9:00 AM

Worship Service 10:00 AM

Parsha Va-et'chanan

Friday, July 26

Kabbalat Shabbat Service 7:30 PM

Saturday, July 27

Torah Study 9:00 AM

Worship Service 10:00 AM

Parsha Eikev

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

Schedule of Services

Friday, August 2

Kabbalat Shabbat Service 7:30 PM

Saturday, August 3

Torah Study 9:00 AM

Worship Service 10:00 AM

Parsha R'eih

Friday, August 9

Family Kabbalat Shabbat
Outdoor location TBD 5:00 PM

Saturday, August 10

Torah Study 9:00 AM

Worship Service 10:00 AM

Jonah Peterson Bar Mitzvah, son of
Rick Peterson & Debra Rothenberg
Parsha Shof'tim

Friday, August 16

Kabbalat Shabbat Service 7:30 PM

Saturday, August 17

Torah Study 9:00 AM

Worship Service 10:00 AM

Parsha Ki Teitzei

Friday, August 23

Kabbalat Shabbat Service 7:30 PM

Saturday, August 24

Torah Study 9:00 AM

Worship Service 10:00 AM

Parsha Ki Tavo

Friday, August 30

Kabbalat Shabbat Service 7:30 PM

Saturday, August 31

Torah Study 9:00 AM

Worship Service 10:00 AM

Parsha Nitzavim/Vayeilech

Social Action News

The Social Action Committee had a great year and would like to thank outgoing chair, Shoshana Hoose, for her terrific leadership.

Our 2012-13 activities included:

- ◇ active participation in the Marriage Equality Campaign;
- ◇ organization of the High Holy Days food drive and winter coat drive;
- ◇ monthly commitment to serve dinner for the Wayside Food Program;
- ◇ participation in the national *Shabbat* focus on preventing gun violence, including testifying in Augusta in support of legislation that would require universal background checks for gun purchases; and
- ◇ involvement with immigrants and refugees in the greater Portland area.

Randi Greenwald and Eleanor Goldberg are the new co-chairs of the Social Action Committee. Three meetings are scheduled between September and April, and additional meetings will be planned as needed. The Committee plans to continue its focus on immigrants and refugees as well as other topical issues.

We welcome new members to the committee. Please join us for our first meeting of the fall on September 24 at 5:30 PM at Bet Ha'am.

If you have any questions, ideas or concerns related to social action, please contact either one of us: Randi Greenwald: randigreenwald@gmail.com or Eleanor Goldberg: egoldbe1@maine.rr.com.

Bet Ha'am Trip to Israel

We are going to Israel!
February 13-23, 2014

Learn about the sites we'll visit, have your questions answered and begin to get excited about this amazing family-friendly trip we'll take together.

To get a preview, take a look at this virtual presentation for our trip: <http://prezi.com/yaqplxtduawl/bet-haam-israel-trip/>

More questions? Please feel free to call the office at 879-0028.



In May, Bet Ha'am members gathered for a festive evening of fun at Big Twenty Bowling Alley. Rabbi Saks proved to be a formidable competitor. We hope you will join us for the re-match that will be scheduled soon.

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
 Rosalyne 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

- Tom & Elizabeth Rosen
- Erin & Chris Koepf

Capital Campaign

- In appreciation of Avis Smith by Suzie & Wayne Berzinis
- In appreciation of Sharon & Perry Newman by Suzie & Wayne Berzinis

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

- In appreciation of Rabbi Saks by Lee & Jamie Broder
- In appreciation of Rabbi Saks by Suzie & Wayne Berzinis
- In appreciation of Rabbi Saks by Janet Jones & Faith Moritz
- In appreciation of Rabbi Saks for his healing prayers by Sharon Ash Tancredi

General Fund

- Anonymous
- In appreciation of Rabbi Saks and the congregation for Hannah Berzinis becoming *Bat Mitzvah* by Alan Levenson
- In memory of Eleanor Kohn on her *yahrzeit* by Laura Kittle & Jeremy Moser
- In appreciation of Lisa Pierce and her work as president of Bet Ha'am by Tim Boulette & Brianna Twofoot
- In memory of parents, Harry & Bessie Gill, on their *yahrzeits* by Sandra & Allen Levinsky
- In honor of Janet Jones & Faith Moritz on their marriage by Rachel & Piotr Stamieszkin

- In honor of Janet Jones & Faith Moritz on their marriage by Russ & Lisa Pierce
- In memory of Sylvia Smith by the Stamieszkin family
- In honor of Lisa Pierce's service as president of the Bet Ha'am board by Jeremy Moser & Laura Kittle
- In honor of Tom Rosen's service as treasurer of the Board by Jeremy Moser & Laura Kittle
- In honor of Elaine Falender's leadership of the strategic planning process by Jeremy Moser & Laura Kittle
- In honor of Rabbi Saks's first two years of rabbinic leadership by Jeremy Moser & Laura Kittle
- In honor of Faith Moritz & Janet Jones on their marriage by Jeremy Moser & Laura Kittle

Sandmel Education Fund

- In honor of Ella Novick on becoming *Bat Mitzvah* by Rachel & Piotr Stamieszkin

Zecher T'zaddik L'vrachah

- Condolences to Josh & Lesley Levy on the loss of Josh's grandfather, Jack L. Levy
- Condolences to Carol Bridges on the loss of her mother, Tabela Breslow Wolf
- Condolences to Stephen & Elaine Smith on the loss of Stephen's mother, Sylvia Smith
- Condolences to John & Linda Isaacson on the loss of John's father, Philip M. Isaacson

July 2013

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

	1 Office Closed	2	3 Morning <i>Minyan</i> 7:00 AM Writing Legacy Project 9:30 AM	4	5 <i>Kabbalat Shabbat</i> Service 7:30 PM	6 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM Sophie Frantz <i>Bat Mitzvah</i>
7	8 Office Closed	9 Garden Committee Weeding 5:30 PM Meaningful Retirement with author Mark Chimsky 6:30 PM	10 Morning <i>Minyan</i> 7:00 AM Writing Legacy Project 9:30 AM School Change Task Force 3:00 PM	11 Library Volunteers 1:00 PM	12 Family <i>Kabbalat</i> <i>Shabbat</i> Service at Fort Williams Park 5:00 PM	13 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM
14	15 Office Closed	16 <i>Tisha B'Av</i>	17 Morning <i>Minyan</i> 7:00 AM Writing Legacy Project 9:30 AM	18 Library Volunteers 1:00 PM	19 <i>Kabbalat Shabbat</i> Service 7:30 PM	20 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM
21	22 Office Closed Membership Committee 7:00 PM	23 Garden Committee Weeding 5:30 PM	24 Morning <i>Minyan</i> 7:00 AM Writing Legacy Project 9:30 AM	25 Library Volunteers 1:00 PM	26 <i>Kabbalat Shabbat</i> Service 7:30 PM	27 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM
28 Bradbury Mountain Family Hike 10:00 AM	29 Office Closed	30 Garden Committee Weeding 5:30 PM	31 Morning <i>Minyan</i> 7:00 AM Writing Legacy Project 9:30 AM			

August 2013

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

				1 Library Volunteers 1:00 PM School Change Task Force 3:30 PM	2 <i>Kabbalat Shabbat</i> Service 7:30 PM	3 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM
4	5 Office Closed	6 Garden Committee Weeding 5:30 PM	7 <i>Morning Minyan</i> 7:00 AM Writing Legacy Project 9:30 AM	8 Library Volunteers 1:00 PM Preparing for the High Holy Days 5:30 PM Adult Learning Committee 7:00 PM	9 <i>Family Kabbalat</i> <i>Shabbat</i> Service at an outdoor location TBD 5:00 PM	10 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM Jonah Peterson <i>Bar Mitzvah</i>
11	12 Office Closed	13 Garden Committee Weeding 5:30 PM	14 <i>Morning Minyan</i> 7:00 AM	15 Library Volunteers 1:00 PM Preparing for the High Holy Days 5:30 PM	16 <i>Kabbalat Shabbat</i> Service 7:30 PM <i>Poetry of Talmud</i> with Rabbi Alice R. Goldfinger 12:00 PM	17 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM
18	19 Office Closed	20 Garden Committee Weeding 5:30 PM Board Meeting 6:30 PM	21 <i>Morning Minyan</i> 7:00 AM Education Committee 6:30 PM	22 Library Volunteers 1:00 PM Preparing for the High Holy Days 5:30 PM	23 <i>Kabbalat Shabbat</i> Service 7:30 PM	24 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM
25 Weed-a-thon 9:30 AM	26 Office Closed	27 Garden Committee Weeding 5:30 PM Membership Committee 7:00 PM	28 <i>Morning Minyan</i> 7:00 AM	29 Library Volunteers 1:00 PM Preparing for the High Holy Days 5:30 PM	30 <i>Kabbalat Shabbat</i> Service 7:30 PM	31 Torah Study 9:00 AM Worship Service 10:00 AM