



Chadashot Ha'am

February 2011

Shevat/Adar

President's Message - Tim Boulette

I have a problem with change.

I don't like rearranging furniture. I hate it when things are not where they're "supposed" to be. Don't even get me started about moving to a new house.

Of course, not all changes are bad. A new car for example – I can get behind that! But too often I look for (and in doing so, *find*) the problem with a new thing, rather than the opportunity.

When I first started coming to Bet Ha'am, there was a lot that was new to me. But clearly there was something special too. My introduction to Bet Ha'am was a Torah study class led by Rabbi Paul Cohen. It was different, revelatory, and absolutely captivating. But just to come and attend Torah study required that I get past my fear of trying something new.

The service was new to me as well. First of all, there was a *lot* of Hebrew, and I like to joke that I traded in my ability to learn other languages in order to "speak English good." Beyond that, there were melodies I'd never heard before, and it seemed like everybody around me knew these melodies. Eventually, however, through simple repetition, I began to learn them and they became part of me.

When Rabbi Goldfinger came to Bet Ha'am, she introduced a number of changes, including new melodies with which I was, again, unfamiliar. It was these new melodies that were the most difficult for me to deal with, not because



I had trouble learning them, but because once again I found myself feeling separate. I did not know melodies that, it seemed, everyone else did. To some extent, I fought them. Sometimes, I tried to sing (to myself) the old ones – the ones I knew. Usually, though, I simply tuned out until the new melody was over

and we moved on.

Of course, when I stopped fighting this new music – when I gave up missing what I knew, learned these new melodies and started to *listen* to them – I found gold. The music, the voices, and the energy brought our worship to a different level. After a while, I realized that I could have gotten there a lot sooner if only I had allowed myself to embrace these changes rather than fight them.

In all likelihood, we will have a new rabbi on July 1. Hopefully, before then, we will be able to begin building a relationship with him or her. During this transitional time, we've had to work to adjust to our interim rabbi, Rabbi Sam – and he to us – in order to make the most of our partnership and of Rabbi Sam's considerable talents. For many of us, this adjusting to the new is hard work. But we recognize that our hard work pays off, both spiritually and in ways that we sometimes don't expect.

I have a problem with change. I'm sure I'm not alone. But, since change is inevitable, let us be as open to it as we can, and let us work together to mine it for gold.

Chadashot Chai-lights

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Dates to Remember

February 5

Movie:
"My Favorite Year" 6:30 PM

February 6

Grade 7-10 Religious School
1:30-3:30 PM

February 13

Grade 11-12 Religious School
5:00-6:30 PM

Congregation Bet Ha'am

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Interim Rabbi Sam Seicol

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

Executive Committee

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 Tom Rosen, Treasurer
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 Deborah Tillman Stone
 Alison Watts

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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Rabbi's Message — Rabbi Sam

Wait For It!

Last month, on the full moon, we celebrated the time of planting of trees. This celebration occurs on the 15th day (*Tet-Vav*) of the mid-winter month (*Shevat*). In most years we expect the next month (*Adar*), the twelfth since last Passover and the beginning of the spring, to be the final month of winter. Yet we have to wait an additional month before Passover this year because the Hebrew calendar is a lunar one.

In a lunar calendar the first of each month is on the new moon. The 14th or 15th of every month is, therefore, on the full moon. The moon takes either 29 or 30 days to go from a new moon to the next new moon. During about six of the twelve months, we anticipate the new moon after 29 days but it does not reappear as we expect, and we have to wait another day. When that happens, we celebrate the new moon (*Rosh Chodesh*) at the time we expect it and again at the time we see it. This year we are celebrating *Rosh Chodesh* twice during the next two months: on February 4 & 5 and on March 5 & 6.

Twelve lunar months take, on average, 354 days. We observe a full cycle of holidays from one Passover to the next, but the seasonal observances would not remain in the appropriate season without an adjustment for the eleven to twelve days difference between the lunar and our 365 day solar calendar.

Before the creation of a fixed calendar, the rabbis and their predecessors created a fix for this problem on an as-needed basis. In years when Passover would occur while it was still winter, they added another winter month (*Adar 2*).

In Maine we might ask, "Another winter month? Why not give us another summer month before Rosh Hashanah?" The answer is that we observe our celebrations based on the climate of Israel.

So we have to wait for an extra new moon before we can get to Passover. This happens seven times every nineteen years. The calendar gives us a message about life, as does all of Jewish traditional teaching and practice. Delayed gratification can be a good thing and is an intrinsic part of life, whether we like it or not. Anticipation and patience are valued in Judaism, and impatience is not. So, as we travel through the extra month of *Adar 2*, Judaism teaches us to sit back, relax, and wait for Passover!

Rabbi Sam

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.

Garden Notes

Bet Ha'am wins URJ Incubator Grant for Sowing Seeds, Braiding Community

There may be a thick layer of snow on the ground, but the Garden Committee is not hibernating. We are actively preparing for a busy spring, and we have some very exciting news to share. We have won an incubator grant from the URJ (Union for Reform Judaism) to fund our wheat growing program and our Scholar/Farmer in Residence Weekend with Elisheva Rogosa. The URJ selected 20 of 170 proposals for new programs to increase engagement of current members and attract new members. The funded proposals also included one from the Chicago area congregation of Bet Ha'am's first rabbi, David Sandmel, to reach out to the GLBT community through a float in the Gay Pride parade in their community.

Our grant proposal process is one example of how our gardening activities seem to naturally foster increased engagement. Our grant writing was a group endeavor and we are grateful to Laura Kittle, Beth Simpson, Toby Rosenberg, Eleanor Goldberg and Craig Lapine for their creative and speedy teamwork.

Save the dates for our Mystery of Matzoh!

Elisheva Rogosa, Scholar/ Farmer in Residence April 2-3

Saturday, April 2. Luncheon and study circle:

Ancient Grain Celebrations through the Cycle of the Jewish Seasons, Liberation, and Food Systems

Restoring Heritage Wheat at Bet Ha'am and in Maine

Sunday, April 3. The Mystery of Matzoh - making kosher for Passover matzoh from ancient wheat in a wood-fired oven

Artisan Matzoh workshop - making potato matzoh, garlic-onion matzoh, egg matzoh and gluten-free matzoh

Stay tuned for more details.

Planning for Raised Beds

If you are a gardener perusing your seed catalogues, please consider setting aside some of your seeds or starts for our raised beds.

If you are interested in being involved or helping with any of these activities, please contact the office or Toby Rosenberg at tobyr@gwi.net

Religious School News

GRADES 7-10

Grades 7-10 will meet from 1:30 – 3:30 PM on Sunday, February 6. We will serve only desserts.

GRADES 11-12

Grades 11-12 will meet on February 13 from 5:00 - 6:30 PM. We welcome new students to join the group.

THANK YOU to last month's substitute teachers: Sarah Szanton, Julie Meltzer, Janel Goodman, Sherri Carignan and Roy Rosenberg.

Mark your calendars for Bet Ha'am's

Purim Carnival

Coming soon!



Sunday morning, March 20

Grab a friend and join the fun!

Volunteers are needed for games and booths. Make up your own or borrow a classic!

Please contact Larisa Semenuk at 847-4010 or larisapeter@gmail.com

Schedule of Services

Friday, February 4

Kabbalat Shabbat Service 7:30 PM

Saturday, February 5

Torah Study 9:00 AM
Worship Service 10:00 PM
Parsha Terumah

Friday, February 11

Kabbalat Shabbat Service 6:30 PM

Saturday, February 12

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

Friday, February 18

Kabbalat Shabbat Service 7:30 PM

Saturday, February 19

Torah Study 9:00 AM
Worship Service 10:00 PM
Parsha Ki Tisa

Friday, February 25

Kabbalat Shabbat Service 7:30 PM

Saturday, February 26

Torah Study 9:00 AM
Worship Service 10:00 PM
Parsha Vayakhel

**Please join the congregation
for these Shabbat Services.**

Update from the Rabbi Search Committee

In January, two additional rabbi candidates visited Bet Ha'am. As with our prior candidates, each rabbi taught a Torah study class and led us in singing. Orly Biggie, members of the Board of Trustees and Search Committee members joined in the class discussions. As a warmup for the first class, the rabbi taught a *niggun* that was familiar from our Shabbat services, but using unfamiliar words from a psalm. The second visit coincided with the recent passing of Debbie Friedman, and in her memory the rabbi led us in her beautiful *L'chi Lach*.

In one class we studied the plagues and God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart. We considered the role of free will and the extent to which innate character traits become destiny. In the second class, we followed the Jews out of Egypt and through the Sea of Reeds. Our discussion focused on the *Midrash* about Nachshon stepping into the Sea as the water slowly rose up to his nose. We considered Nachshon as a Jewish model of leadership and shared "Nachshon moments" from our own lives.

To help with the Search Committee's assessment process, class participants completed evaluation forms assessing each rabbi's mastery of the subject, effectiveness of delivery, and interaction with the class.

A key part of each rabbi's visit has been our formal interview, generally lasting about two hours. You can find a copy of our standard interview questions in the Search Committee notebook in the Library. We added questions relating to the particular qualifications or experience of the individual candidates to these standard questions. These additional questions will be compiled and added to the committee notebook. While committee members were giving tours of Portland, having lunch and socializing in smaller groups, we also had the opportunity to ask many of the other questions that congregants had raised in our various focus group meetings. All of this input is being included in our evaluations.

Each of our visiting candidates has shared generously of their Jewish knowledge, their spirituality, and their ideas for educational programming, social action involvement, congregational management, membership development and fundraising. We have shared with them Bet Ha'am's core values, challenges and dreams.

The Rabbi Search Committee is now moving into the final phase of its work. From our field of 30 resumes and 13 telephone interviews, we narrowed our candidate field to the four rabbis who have visited with us at Bet Ha'am. During the month of February, the Search Committee will continue with reference checking and the site visit stage of our process. The committee's goal is to have a final report for the Board before the end of the month. The task now for the Rabbi Search Committee and for the Board is to determine whether one of these candidates is the right match for our congregation as we move

Profile: Membership Committee

The Membership Committee's mission is to encourage new membership, welcome those who have chosen to join, and help to create a sense of community. This September we hosted the Welcome Back breakfast on the first day of religious school. The morning was sunny and beautiful and we all enjoyed refreshments and mingled in the fresh air before school began.

We have reached out with phone calls to let new members know that we are here to answer questions and to serve as a resource as they become acquainted with Bet Ha'am. We have also made calls to members who have made the difficult choice to leave Bet Ha'am. These calls provide us with information we can use to assess the needs of our members and create change as needed.

In the next few months, the Membership Committee will be planning a new member luncheon. We are also brainstorming ideas for an event that will bring our community together for fun and socializing. Finally, we are looking for a creative way to introduce our new rabbi to the Jewish community at large and to encourage new membership as a result.

We are seeking new committee members. Whether you are a founding member of Bet Ha'am or you joined last week, your input is valuable to us. We are seeking social butterflies, Type A organizers, creative types and everyone in between. If you are interested in finding out more about our committee, please email Beth Lucien at bethlucien@yahoo.com or Jessica Butzel at jbutzel@gmail.com.

Adult Library News

We are extending our challenge to achieve triple *chai* (54) of our members having library cards through February. Forty-two members already have library cards, so we only need 12 more to achieve this goal. Please consider being one of them!

Getting a card is simple. Stop in at the library, find the clipboard on the reading table and fill out the requested information. Or, you can e-mail Donna Landau at dmlandau@hotmail.com with your name, mailing address and phone number. Either way, a key tag (library card) will soon be waiting for you at the library office. Then you can borrow any of the wonderful books that are in our collection.

Thanks to Jane Sloven and Joe Py, we have added an unabridged set of *Zohar* books in Hebrew with English translations and commentaries to our Reference section.

We also thank Gary Caplan, who is now volunteering in the library on Sunday mornings.

The library is staffed on Tuesdays from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM and on Sunday mornings when there is religious school from 10:00 AM to noon.

We also welcome you to come browse, read and relax any time the synagogue is open.

Social Action Shabbat, March 4

Our newly revived Social Action Committee is planning a special Shabbat service that will focus on the needs of Maine families who are struggling financially and how we can help. The Social Action Shabbat service will start at 7:30 PM.

Christine Hastedt, co-founder and public policy director of Maine Equal Justice, will give the d'var Torah. Ms. Hastedt has been advocating for low-income Mainers for nearly 40 years and she has won numerous awards for her work.

After the service, the Social Action Committee will host an oneg and community service "fair." Congregants will have an opportunity to learn about three projects serving low-income Mainers that need volunteers.

We are asking everyone who attends services on March 4 to bring canned goods to donate to a local food pantry. Please see the Social Action Committee's blog for a list of needed items: <http://www.bhsocialaction.blogspot.com/>

The next Social Action Committee meeting will be on Feb. 13 at 10 AM in room 101 at the synagogue. We need your help! For more information, please contact Shoshana Hoose at shoose@maine.rr.com.

Book Group

The next meeting of the Book Group will be on March 6 at 4:00 PM at Lisa Munderback's home. The group will be discussing The Ladies Auxiliary by Tova Mirvis.

For more information contact Lisa at lisamunderback@yahoo.com or at 761-9749.

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 my husband Richard Kaplan by **Daisy Kaplan**
- In appreciation of Jane Snerson and Eileen Kalikow for all of their help by **Daisy Kaplan**

Sandmel Education Fund

- In appreciation of Peter Scott and his music by **Leora Rabin & David Inger**

General Fund

- In honor of Charles Gardner becoming Bar Mitzvah by **Jill & Michael Epstein**
- In memory of my loved ones on their *yahrzeits* by **Frances Chaiken**
- Wishing Elizabeth Rosen a speedy recovery by **Marilyn & Gerry Sherry**
- Wishing David Butzel a speedy recovery by **Marilyn & Gerry Sherry**

- In honor of Jane Snerson by **Margot & Eric, Adam & Rachel Podtburg**
- In memory of Irving Poliner by **Barbara Poliner**
- In memory of Ghetto Spierer on her *yahrzeit* by **Wendy & Bill Sirois**
- Wishing Elizabeth Rosen a speedy recovery by **Jeremy Moser & Laura Kittle**
- Wishing David Butzel a speedy recovery by **Jeremy Moser & Laura Kittle**
- In honor of Charles Gardner becoming Bar Mitzvah by **Jeremy Moser & Laura Kittle**
- In appreciation of services by **Margery Kashman**
- In honor of Sharon & Perry Newman for their service to Bet Ha'am by the **Novick family**
- In honor of Rachel Stamieszkin for her service to Bet Ha'am by the **Novick family**
- In appreciation by **Marshal Gibson**
- In memory of Ruth Tabenken by **Maggie & Jim Goodman**

Welcome New Members

- Daniel & Julia Bailin
- Louis & Alexis Brownstein

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, March 26

Havdalah Celebration & Potluck Dinner
HONORING RABBI ALICE GOLDFINGER

Zecher T'zaddik L'vrachah

- Condolences to Debra Guckenheimer on the loss of her mother, Helen
- Condolences to Jill & Alan Morris on the loss of Jill's father
- Condolences to Ron Breazeale & Asherah Cinnamon on the loss of Ron's mother, Mary Sue Breazeale
- Condolences to Daisy Kaplan, Doug and Ann Kaplan on the loss of Richard Kaplan, husband and father

February 2011

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

1

2

NCJW Financial
Literacy
Program
7-9:30 PM

3

Development
Committee
Meeting
7:00 PM

4

Kabbalat Shabbat
Service 7:30 PM

5

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

Movie: "My Favorite
Year" 6:30 PM

6

Grades 7-10
Religious School
1:30-3:30 PM

7

8

Education
Committee
Meeting
7:00 PM

9

10

11

Family Kabbalat
Shabbat Service
6:30 PM

12

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

13

Grades 10-12
Religious School
5:00-6:30 PM

Social Action
Committee
Meeting
10:00 AM

14

15

16

Board Meeting
6:30 PM

17

Adult Education
Committee
Meeting
7:00 PM

18

Kabbalat Shabbat
Service 7:30 PM

19

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

20

No Religious
School

21

22

23

24

Garden
Committee
Meeting
7:00 PM

25

Kabbalat Shabbat
Service 7:30 PM

26

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

27

No Religious
School

28