



KI MI-TZION TETSE TORAH: THE TORAH WILL COME OUT OF ZION or DAAA-DA-DA-DA-DAAA-DAAA

I can't believe it. The young adults who were babies when I came to Portland are graduating from high school. It seems so odd to me that as I feel younger, they get older! I think of them as kids in Hebrew School and/or blooming adolescent-young adults, chomping at the bit to become adults and celebrate their Bar or Bat Mitzvah. I remember how grown-up they looked, how mature they acted, and how deeply they thought about their D'var Torah (or not) on that special day.

Sadly, I tend to lose touch with them after their *simcha*. Many remain in Hebrew School as *madrachim* (aides), but I don't have as much direct contact with them as I had previously. And so I watch from afar and scan the newspapers looking for sports and/or academic

achievements. And then I see them at a High Holiday service and ask how high school is, only to find out they've graduated from college and are pursuing some amazing feat! They have become adults; they have left home, and are beginning their own lives. Where does the time go?

As we observe the season of graduations, we also observe the Festival of Shavuot, the giving of the Torah to the children of Israel. I am reminded of a very famous story in the Talmud (*Bava Metzia* 59a-b) where a group of sages are arguing Jewish law, and where even God's influence doesn't settle the question. Rabbi Eliezer, so confident that his opinion is correct, pronounces in the company of the other sages:

'If the law agrees with me, let this carob tree prove it!' Thereupon the carob tree was torn a hundred cubits out of its place.... 'No proof can be brought from a carob tree,' they retorted.

Again he said to them: 'If the law agrees with me, let the stream of water prove it.' The stream of water then flowed backwards. 'No proof can be brought from a stream of water,' they rejoined.

Again he urged: 'If the law agrees with me, let the walls of the schoolhouse prove it,' whereupon the walls began to fall. But Rabbi Joshua scolded them, saying: 'When scholars are engaged in a legal dispute, what right have you to interfere?' Therefore they (the walls) did not fall in honor of Rabbi Joshua, nor did they resume an upright position in honor of Rabbi Eliezer, and they are still standing there inclined.

Again he said to them, 'If the law agrees with me, let it be proved in Heaven.' Whereupon a heavenly Voice

cried out: 'Why do you dispute with Rabbi Eliezer, seeing that in all matters the law agrees with him?'

But Rabbi Joshua arose and exclaimed: 'It is not in Heaven (quoting *Deuteronomy* 30:12)...

'What did the Holy One Blessed be God do in that hour?'" "God laughed with joy...and said, 'My children have defeated Me, My children have defeated me!'"

In this situation, Rabbi Eliezer is positive that he is right. Even God and nature signify that he is right. And yet the law does not follow Rabbi Eliezer. God's opinion is over-ruled.

What does this have to do with graduation and with Shavuot? This story is very surprising from the perspective both of the Sages and of God. Rabbi Joshua posits that once the Torah was given to the people, it took on a life of its own. The teachings were no longer held solely by God, but were given to humanity. From that moment on, humans had to do their best to understand God's words. This would lead to discussion and even to disagreement. Not even God's opinion held the same strength it once had. But what did God do? God "laughed with joy!" God, perhaps satisfied that the Holy One's children had integrated the proper values, rejoiced in their independence. In this way, Shavuot is a kind of 'graduation,' a transition from dependence to independence, where we take the Torah and make it ours.

Just as we received God's Torah, our children receive our "Torah." We hope the two "Torahs" are the same, and we hope that they will take our lessons and

see *Rabbi* page 10

BY RABBI CAROLYN BRAUN

Shofar is now digital!

To receive the e-Shofar, please contact the TBE office at 774-2649 or office@tbemaine.org with your email address. *Limited printed copies will be available at TBE.*

Talkin' Torah: A Group Discussion over Lunch

Following our regular Shabbat morning services in the TBE Social Hall, at approximately 12:00 noon.

Two Saturday sessions remain:

- May 12 – *Merril Abramson*
- June 9 – *Ivan and Sue Most*

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TEMPLE BETH EL

"Our vision is to be an embracing, supportive and vibrant community which observes Judaism in the Conservative tradition and which is devoted to the perpetuation of Jewish values and culture. Temple Beth El honors the diversity of its members and is committed to their spiritual growth."

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Congregants are encouraged to make regular attendance at Temple Beth El a part of their lives.

DAILY SERVICES

| | |
|------------------------------|---------|
| Monday through Friday | 6:50 am |
| Friday Evening Services | 5:30 pm |
| Saturday and Jewish Holidays | 9:30 am |
| Sunday | 9:00 am |
| Secular Holidays | 8:30 am |

"Do not separate yourself from the congregation."

—Hillel, Pirkei Avot, 2:5

| | |
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| Administrative Assistants | Anne-Marie |
| | Jeannine Poulin |
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| Rabbi Emeritus | Harry Z. Sky, D.D. |
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| Secretary | Fae Silverman |

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Joan Levy
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Ex officio: Rabbi Carolyn Braun,
Jodi Veysey

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Shofar

Joy Krinsky, Production Editor



Temple Beth El is a member of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.



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THE RABBI, THE PRIEST, AND THE TALMUD...AND US

As I sit down to write this it has been less than three weeks since Purim and only a few days before April 1. Since both occasions are associated with humor I thought I'd begin by sharing an old joke. A joke which in many ways is, actually, not a bad introduction to the Talmud.

One day a priest meets his friend, the rabbi, and says to him, "You have taught me many things, but there is one thing in particular that I have wanted very much to learn, which you refuse to teach me. I want you to teach me the Talmud." The rabbi replies: "As I have told you before, you

are a gentile and while you are a brilliant man you still have the brain of a gentile. There is no way that you will ever succeed in understanding the Talmud."

(At this point I should digress briefly to say that this joke notwithstanding, I do believe it is possible for a gentile to understand the Talmud. There are actually a number of such scholars. In fact, one of my most talented Talmud classmates at the Jewish Theological Seminary was a Christian woman who went on to earn a Masters in Talmud and Doctorate in Ancient Judaism. Her father was a leading scholar of Christian history at Yale and she had no interest in converting to Judaism. I remember fondly when classes resumed one January that Kris excitedly shared her belief that she had become the first non-Jewish woman to receive a full 20 volume set of Talmud as a Christmas gift! In any event, to return to the joke...)

Despite being rebuffed by his friend, the priest continues persistently in his attempt to persuade the rabbi to teach him the Talmud. Finally, the rabbi gives in.

The rabbi says to the priest: "I will teach you the Talmud on the condition that you correctly answer one question." The priest excitedly agrees and asks "What is the question?" The rabbi begins: "Two men fall down

through a chimney. One comes out dirty and the other comes out clean. Which of the two goes to wash up?" "That's very simple," replies the priest. "Obviously, the one who is dirty goes to wash up and the one who is clean does not."

The rabbi responds: "I'm sorry, but, I told you that you'll never succeed in understanding the Talmud! The exact opposite is true. The clean one looks at the dirty one and thinks that he is also dirty and so goes to wash up. The dirty one, on the other hand, looks at the clean one and thinks that he is also clean and, therefore, does not go to wash up."

The priest says to the rabbi: "I didn't think of that. I know that I answered the question incorrectly, but, now I think I've got the hang of it. Please give me another chance." The rabbi responds: "Very well. So, two men fall down through a chimney. One comes out dirty and the other comes out clean. Which of the two goes to wash up?"

The priest answers: "I believe I've got it. The clean one looks at the dirty one and thinks he is also dirty and so goes to wash up. On the other hand, the dirty man looks at the clean man and thinks that he is also clean and, therefore, does not go to wash up."

The rabbi responds: "I told you, you will never understand the Talmud. You are wrong again! The clean one looks in the mirror, sees that he is clean and, therefore, does not go to wash up. However, the dirty one looks in the mirror and seeing that he is dirty goes to wash up."

The priest complains, "But you did not tell me that there is a mirror!" The rabbi answers: "I told you: You are a gentile. With your brain you will never succeed in understanding the Talmud. To understand the Talmud, you have to think of all possibilities." "All right," groans the priest. "Let me try one more time. Please ask me one more question."

JACOB RYAN GOLDBERG



Please join Connie and Brian Goldberg in celebrating the Bar Mitzvah of their son, Jacob Ryan, on Friday, June 15 and Saturday, June 16, 2012.

Jake is in the seventh grade at Lyman Moore Middle School where he is a member of the lacrosse and Nordic ski teams. Jacob is an avid athlete and has earned the right to participate in the Maine State MathCounts Competition in March. Jake also enjoys video games, listening to loud music and being outside with his friends.

Jacob and his parents thank all of his Hebrew School teachers, Dov and the Rabbi for helping him prepare for this special day.

"Alright. For the last time," asks the rabbi, "Two men fall through a chimney. One comes out dirty and the other comes out clean. Which of the two goes to wash up?"

"Okay. I'm sure I've got it now!" replies the priest. "If there is no mirror, the clean one will look at the dirty one and think that he is also dirty and, therefore, will go to wash up. Likewise, the dirty one will look at the clean one and think that he is also clean, and, therefore, will not go to wash up. However, if there IS a mirror around, the dirty man will look in the mirror and seeing he is dirty will go to wash up, while the clean man will look in the mirror and see that he is clean and so will not go to wash up."

The rabbi sighs: "I told you that you will never succeed in understanding the Talmud. You are a gentile. And as I have said, a brilliant and learned man. But, you have a non-Jewish brain. Tell me, just how is it possible for two men to fall through a

see **Dov** page 10

YAD L'YAD

BECKY DELOIS,
YAD L'YAD CHAIR

Greetings to our Temple Beth El Congregation!

Yad l'Yad has had a busy winter doing something different. Although we have not had the need to deliver shiva meals, we have been making meals for a family from mid January through February and giving rides to an elderly person who otherwise would not have been able to attend Saturday services this winter. What I am pleased about is that it has been a treat to help our Temple members. That's what we are all about. I hope that in the future, you, the membership, will call the Temple (774-2649) or me (899-4068) to let us know if a family member needs help with rides to the doctor or rides to the store, or meals while recovering from surgery or an illness. We are here to serve you with open hearts.

Be well and enjoy the warmer air and fragrances of springtime!

MAZEL TOV

To Pearl Levine, who celebrated a special birthday — her 99th — on February 11, 2012.

To Ali Abramson, daughter of David and Lynn Abramson, on her performance as Tevey's daughter Tzeitel in South Portland High's production of *Fiddler On the Roof*.

To Ethel Koocher for celebrating a special birthday — her 90th — on February 27!

To Rebecca Goodman and her family on the occasion of Rebecca's Bat Mitzvah.

To Gil Dichter, who received the Spotlight Award for Lifetime Achievement for his work in the Idexx Water Division.

TODAH RABAH

To Tom Berman for dusting, cleaning, updating and generally providing TLC for the TBE office computers.

To Ellie Miller for leading the Jan. 21st Talkin' Torah study session, and to Rabbi Braun for preparing the luncheon that day.

To Joan Barkin for coordinating and setting up TBE's Saturday Night At the Movies series.

To all those who made our Mirror Ball & Wine Tasting a success!

- BORDEAUX SPONSORS \$300 - Pattie & Gregg Garson

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- EVENT COMMITTEE - Pattie Garson, Kate Foye, Rena Becker

- VOLUNTEERS - Rabbi Braun, Ben Garson, Derek Dewey, Jodi & Terry Veysey

- VENDORS - CVC Catering Group, DJ Erich Kruger, Cork & Barrel, Maine Event Design & Décor

To Professor Sanford Freedman for leading the February 11th Talkin' Torah study session, and to Hedy Cohen for preparing the quiches for the luncheon that day.

To Ilene & Myron Berman, Margie & Tom Berman, and Shelley & Mark Chorney for sponsoring the Oneg Friday evening, February 24, in memory of Samuel and Ruth Berman.

To Professor Danielle Freedman for teaching Polish Poetry from the Shoah adult education classes at TBE.

To TBE staff Sherri Quint and Jodi Veysey for using lots of leftover sour cream, eggs and other ingredients and baking 10 delicious coffee cakes for Shabbat kiddushes.

To Craig & Dorte Goodman for sponsoring the Oneg on Friday evening, March 2, in honor of their daughter Rebecca's Bat Mitzvah.

To Nancy Davidson for having the painting in the TBE conference room re-matted.

To Pat Reef for donating a beautiful Etrog plant to the TBE office.

To Joy Krinsky for planning and helping to set up TBE's Purim Megillah Reading in Ancient Shushan.

To Dov Goldberg, Rabbi Braun and David Kemmerer for preparing the TBE Purim Dinner.

To Ross Goldberg for volunteering to take photographs for the TBE Bidding for Good Auction Online Auction.

To Clara Purinton for volunteering to help with the TBE Passover mailing!

To Ross Goldberg for helping sort and match auction items to winners.

CONDOLENCES

To the family of Lester Jolovitz, who passed away in Florida on Wednesday, February 29. He will be sadly missed by his wife, Barbara; brother, Alvin Jolovitz; step-daughter, Deborah Barlock and husband John; step-son Karl Rogers; and grandsons Ben and Will Barlock and Nicky Rogers.

To the family of Dr. Sidney Jacobson, who passed away in Portland on Friday, March 9.

To Judy Gatchell and all of her extended family on the loss of Judy's beloved uncle, Irving "Ickey" Emple, who passed away at the age of 90 in Bangor on Sunday, March 12.

To the family and friends of Ivan Suzman, who passed away in Portland on Wednesday, March 14.

To Phyllis and Bernie Givertz and all of their extended family on the loss of Phyllis's sister, Esther Smith, who passed away in Miami on Thursday, March 15.

To Daniela Skalina and family of the passing of her mother, Gerta Slezak in Montreal, Canada on Monday, March 19. Gerta was mother-in-law of Andre and grandmother of Nicole and Karin Skalina.

To the family and friends of Harold Carlin, father of Barbara Carlin, father-in-law of Ira Shapiro and grandfather of Benjamin, Jennifer and Paul. Harold passed away at the Maine Veterans Home on Friday morning, March 23.



TEMPLE BETH EL

C A L E N D A R

MAY – JUNE 2012

IYAR - TAMMUZ 5772

MAY

| | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wednesday, May 2 | 3:30 pm 6:30 pm | Hebrew School Melton School |
| Friday, May 4 | 5:30 pm 7:30 pm | Kabbalat Shabbat services Shabbat candle lighting time |
| Saturday, May 5 | 9:00 am 9:30 am 8:39 pm | Hebrew School Shabbat Experience Shabbat services Havdalah time |
| Sunday, May 6 | 9:00 am 9:30 am 9:45 am | NO HEBREW SCHOOL Morning Minyan TBE Landscaping Clean Up Day Adult Ed Class with Rabbi Braun: <i>Jewish Literacy on One Foot</i> |
| 10:00 am | | Kol Yeladim Mothers Day & Israel Independence Day Activities |
| 11:00 am | | Adult Ed Class with Prof. Sanford Freedman: <i>Shaking Off Jewish Identity: Assimilation Then & Now</i> |
| Tuesday, May 8 | 7:00 pm | Executive Committee Meeting |
| Wednesday, May 9 | 3:30 pm 6:30 pm | Hebrew School Melton School |
| Thursday, May 10 | 6:50 am | Lag B'Omer Morning Minyan |
| Friday, May 11 | 5:30 pm 7:38 pm | Kabbalat Shabbat services Shabbat candle lighting time |
| Saturday, May 12 | 9:30 am 12:00 noon 8:47 pm | Shabbat services Talkin' Torah - Lunch and Learn Havdalah time |
| Sunday, May 13 | 9:00 am | Mothers Day Morning Minyan Hebrew School Lag B'Omer Maccabiah Schmooze & Shmear |
| Tuesday, May 15 | 5:30 pm | TBE Board Meeting |
| Wednesday, May 16 | 3:30 pm 6:30 pm | Hebrew School Melton Classes |

| | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Friday, May 18 | 5:30 pm 7:45 pm | Kabbalat Shabbat services Shabbat candle lighting time |
| Saturday, May 19 | 9:30 am 8:54 pm | Shabbat services Havdalah time |
| Sunday, May 20 | 9:00 am | Morning Minyan Hebrew School Schmooze & Shmear Honoring Jewish War Veterans - Graveside Flag Placement (<i>meet at TBE</i>) |
| 9:45 am | | Adult Ed Class with Rabbi Braun: <i>Jewish Literacy on One Foot</i> |
| 9:45am | | Adult Ed Class with Prof. Sanford Freedman: <i>Shaking Off Jewish Identity: Assimilation Then & Now</i> |
| 1:00 pm | | JCA Mah Johng Marathon @ TBE |
| Wednesday, May 23 | 3:30 pm 6:30 pm | Hebrew School Melton Classes |
| Friday, May 25 | 5:30 pm 7:52 pm | Kabbalat Shabbat services Shabbat candle lighting time |
| Saturday, May 26 | 9:30 am 9:01 pm | Erev Shavuot Shabbat Services Holiday candle lighting time |
| Sunday, May 27 | 9:30 am 9:02 pm | Shavuot - NO HEBREW SCHOOL Holiday Services Holiday candle lighting time |
| Monday, May 28 | 9:30 am 11:15 am (approx.) 9:03 pm | Shavuot Memorial Day TBE OFFICE CLOSED Holiday Services Yizkor service Havdalah |
| Wednesday, May 30 | 3:30 pm 6:30 pm | Hebrew School Melton Classes |

continued ⇨

JUNE

| | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Friday, June 1 | 5:30 pm 7:58 pm | Kabbalat Shabbat services Shabbat candle lighting time |
| Saturday, June 2 | 9:30 am 9:07 pm | Shabbat services Havdalah time |
| Sunday, June 3 | 9:00 am | Morning Minyan Last Day of Hebrew School Schmooze & Shmear |
| Friday, June 8 | 5:30 pm 8:03 pm | Kabbalat Shabbat services Shabbat candle lighting time |
| Saturday, June 9 | 9:30 am 12:00 noon 9:12 pm | Shabbat services Talkin' Torah Lunch & Learn Havdalah |
| Sunday, June 10 | 9:00 am 10:00 am | Morning Minyan TBE Annual Meeting & Open House Celebration |
| Tuesday, June 12 | 7:00 pm | Executive Committee Meeting |
| Friday, June 15 | 5:30 pm 8:07 pm | Kabbalat Shabbat services & Bar Mitzvah of Jacob Goldberg Shabbat candle lighting time |
| Saturday, June 16 | 9:30 am | Shabbat services & Bar Mitzvah of Jacob Goldberg Havdalah time |
| Sunday, June 17 | 9:00 am | Fathers' Day Morning Minyan |
| Tuesday, June 19 | 6:00 pm | TBE Board Meeting |
| Friday, June 22 | 5:30 pm 8:09 pm | Kabbalat Shabbat service Shabbat candle lighting time |
| Saturday, June 23 | 9:30 am 9:17 pm | Shabbat services Havdalah time |
| Sunday, June 24 | 9:00 am | Morning Minyan |
| Friday, June 29 | 5:30 pm 8:09 pm | Kabbalat Shabbat service Shabbat candle lighting time |
| Saturday, June 30 | 9:30 am 9:17 pm | Shabbat services Havdalah time |

Honor Family & Friends with a Kiddush at Temple Beth El



Sharing a Friday night or Shabbat service and Kiddush is a wonderful opportunity to support our congregation, build community, share in the *simcha* of a birthday, anniversary or graduation, and offer comfort to those observing a *yahrzeit*.

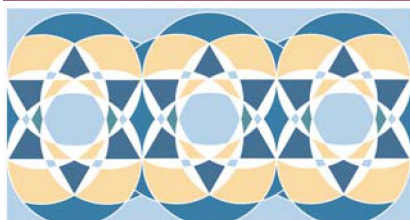
There are several ways to sponsor a Kiddush:

- **Prepare the Kiddush yourself:**
Share your love of Shabbat and your favorite Shabbat recipes by preparing refreshments for Kiddush. All food prep must be done in the TBE kitchen, and should be coordinated through the TBE office. TBE will set up and serve.
- **Let Temple Beth El organize the Kiddush for you:**
FRIDAY NIGHT ONEG
- \$60 - includes two loaves of challah, cheese, crackers, cookies or coffee cake, a vegetable platter and dip and cold drinks.
- \$75 - includes all of the above with the addition of a fruit platter
- SATURDAY KIDDUSH
- \$75 - A Shabbat Oneg with a selection which may include vegetables, fruit, gefilte fish, herring etc.

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For more information and to reserve a date to sponsor a Kiddush, please contact the Temple Beth El office at tel. 774-2649 or email office@tbemaine.org.

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TBE ANNUAL APPEAL 5772

Thank you for your generous support of our TBE's Annual Appeal. To date, we have raised over \$35,421 towards our ongoing Annual Appeal goal of \$50,000.



Do you have family members or friends who are interested in Temple Beth El?

Please have them contact the Temple office at 774-2649 or office@tbemaine.org to be added to our *Shofar* newsletter email list, or for membership information.

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Murray and Shirley Rosen, in Honor of Pearl Levine's Special Birthday

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Bill and Vera Clenott, in Memory of Hattie Clenott

Bruce and Ellen Ruben, in Memory of Mary Kaplan

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Dauna Binder, in Memory of Dwight Webb

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David Band, in Memory of Benjamin Band

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Gil and Marilyn Praver, in Memory of Iona Praver

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Henni Polak, in Memory of Bernard Polak

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Debbie Kanter, in Honor of Tom & Marjorie Berman's Anniversary

Debbie Kanter, in Memory of Zavil Levine

Debbie Kanter, in Memory of Shirley Bogg

Tom and Marjorie Berman, in Memory of Jerry Fine

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Amy Rubin, in Honor of Ethel Koocher's special birthday

Arthur and Fran Jacobson, in Honor of Ethel Koocher's special birthday

Bernard and Shirley Kott, in Honor of Ethel Koocher's special birthday

Bill and Betsy Webber, in Honor of Ethel Koocher's special birthday

Frank and Paula Walter, in Honor of Ethel Koocher's special birthday

Gerald and Selma Cope, in Honor of Ethel Koocher's special birthday

Irv and Vicki Goldstein, in Honor of Ethel Koocher's special birthday

Irv Goldsmith and Selma Pluznick, in Honor of Ethel Koocher's special birthday

Jerry and Phyllis Rosen, in Honor of Ethel Koocher's special birthday

Joe and Rene Gottheim, in Honor of Ethel Koocher's special birthday

Liza Martin, in Honor of Ethel Koocher's special birthday

Madeline Frost, in Honor of Ethel Koocher's special birthday

Paul and Susan Trusiani, in Honor of Ethel Koocher's special birthday

Richard and Adele Mack, in Honor of Ethel Koocher's special birthday

Richard and Adele Mack, in Honor of Pearl Levine's "Special" Birthday

Shelly Maybrown, in Honor of Ethel Koocher's special birthday

Ethel Koocher, in Memory of Dr. A. Ross

Jackie Robinov, in Memory of Isaac Wald

Jackie Robinov, in Memory of Alec Bookbinder

Jackie Robinov, in Memory of Eva Wald

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Scott and Alise Koocher, in Memory of Nathan Koocher

Stan and Sherrie Schatz, in Memory of Ina Weissman

Stan and Sherrie Schatz, in Memory of Bea Schatz

Ethel Koocher, in Memory of Ina Weissman

Kulanu Contribution

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Steve and Chichi Levine, in Memory of Maurice Levine

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Pearl Levine, in Memory of Edith Bick

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Rubin and Sally Laskoff, in Memory of Rachael Laskoff

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Morton and Esther Gold, in Memory of Irving Morse

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David and Elaine Lewis, in Memory of Phyllis Klein

Dick and Adele Aronson, in Memory of Phyllis Klein

Donations continued on page 9

Donations from page 8

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Harriette Small, in Memory of Phyllis Klein
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Isabel Grayson, in Memory of Phyllis Klein
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Marshall and Sandra RuInick, in Memory of Phyllis Klein
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Charlie Young, in Memory of Beatrice Carlin
Charlie Young, in Memory of Manuel Young
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Yad L'Yad

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Suzi Osher, in Memory of Dr. Alfred Osher
Thelma Cope & Adam Mack, in Memory of Mitchell Cope

Donations listed were received at Temple Beth El by March 28, 2012.

TIKKUN OLAM NEWS

The Habitat for Humanity Interfaith walk will be held May 20 at noon at St. Pius Church on Ocean Avenue in Portland. Temple Beth El will once again participate in this annual event to raise money for building local homes. Come for lunch and walk around the Back Cove with other Temple members and friends to raise money for this worthwhile cause.

Volunteering with Wayside: TBE members now have the opportunity to volunteer on the second Thursday of the month for Wayside Soup Kitchen at Woodford's Church. The set-up begins at 4:00, dinner is served between 5:30 and 6:30, and cleanup is over by 7:00 or 7:15 pm. Please contact Carolyn Turcio-Gilman at cturciogilman@yahoo.com or Barbara Peisner at 756-3028 if you have any questions.

We continue to collect non-perishable food items, toiletries, and seasonal needs for Preble Street Resource Center. Currently, Preble Street is in need of towels, socks, and transitional clothing.

Rabbi *continued from page 1*

build on them. Even while we miss the innocence and happy times that we experienced in their younger years, we rejoice at the wonderful adults they become.

As our children graduate and move on; as they begin to (intelligently) disagree with us, it is our challenge to rejoice in our 'defeat' and to encourage them on.

Dov *continued from page 3*

chimney and one to come out clean?"

So, other than the fact that I've always liked this joke, why am I sharing it with you? As you are reading this late spring will be upon us, the weather will be becoming more temperate, and our thoughts will be turning toward the approach of summer. For many of us, without any holiday celebrations or as many structured Temple Beth El events our Judaism has a tendency to take a nice long vacation along with the rest of us. But, as a Jewish educator, I can't help but suggest that spring can be used as a time to reflect on our Judaism and think about how we will carry it forward through the summer until September and the High Holidays are staring us again in the face.

The festival of Shavuot begins on Saturday evening, May 26 and continues until Memorial Day night, May 28. On Shavuot we celebrate the Jewish people receiving the Torah on Mount Sinai. But, the Torah we celebrate isn't limited simply to the images we often have of the tablets of the Ten Commandments, or even of the Torah Scroll and the Five Books of Moses contained in it. Torah is the ongoing tradition of our people's wrestling to understand what The Divine wants from us, and how to live a life that is more Godly. The Talmud, as an expression and part of this unfolding Torah, is the greatest (but certainly not only) repository of that struggle forged in the first half of the first millennium CE. It has pointed the way, down to the present, for how we as Jews can continue to seek guidance from our tradition

in trying to figure out how to live in the present and chart a course for the future.

The joke I shared about the Talmud has two important lessons for us about our tradition of Torah. The first is that it is indeed a tradition of thinking very carefully about our lives and all of the possibilities in life. It is a tradition which believes that in order to truly apply the highest values taught in the Torah to our lives we need to explore the way those values play out in all the multifaceted ways life might confront us. Only then can we appreciate what those values mean and how they might interplay with other values. Secondly, in the joke the biggest problem with the priest's attempts at answers is that he merely parrots back what the rabbi teaches him. But, the brilliance and power of our Torah tradition is precisely that it is a living tree that grows and responds to the environment and the impact (consciously and unconsciously) that we have on that environment. We shape the development of Torah when we confront our tradition and try to learn from it in shaping our own lives.

I'd like to suggest that we take Shavuot and this spring as an opportunity to reflect on the teachings of Torah. And as we reflect, let's try to use this time as an opportunity to think about and plan how Torah and the Jewish tradition can enhance the choices we make for this summer. Instead of taking Judaism off for the summer, let's think of it as an opportunity to make Jewish choices actively and unconstrained, without the external prodding of the calendar. That calendar, wonderful as it is, will be looming over us again soon enough come September.



In Eternal Memory
זכור עולם

TEMPLE BETH EL

YAHARZEIT MEMORIAL BOARD CAMPAIGN

In the past few years, the six boards that currently adorn our walls have become almost filled to capacity as families have purchased plaques to honor a loved one who has passed.

Our goal is to raise over \$14,000 to purchase a much-needed new board. Please consider any pledge amount that you can give, so that we may continue to offer a place of remembrance for generations to come.

Please contact our TBE Director, Jodi Veysey at 774-2649 or director@tbemaine.org, to discuss a pledge amount or if you have any questions.

— \$13,155 raised so far —



TBE's ANNUAL MEETING & OPEN HOUSE

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Shofar Deadlines – July – August 2012 issue is May 15.

Please submit material via e-mail as text included in the body of the message or as an attached Microsoft Word document to office@tbemaine.org. Submissions on paper will also be accepted.