

Sinai Temple

BULLETIN



For Your Consideration

Rabbi Mark Dov Shapiro

What if God is a delusion?

What if Nobel laureate, Steven Weinberg, is right when he says, "Anything that scientists can do to weaken the hold of religion should be done and may in the end be our greatest contribution to civilization."

Have you noticed two of the titles on the current New York Times Best Sellers list? Oxford scientist Richard Dawkins has written, "The God Delusion." Sam Harris has become quite the celebrity with his more popular, "The End of Faith."

What both books present is a severe critique of religion. Dawkins, for example, calls one chapter in his book, "Why there almost certainly is no God." Harris argues that human beings have for too long suspended reason in favor of religious belief and then gone on to perform some of the worst atrocities in human history in the name of religion and God.

I must be honest and tell you that, when *The End of Faith* was first published back in 2004, I borrowed a copy from the library. I read a few pages and found it to be so polemic and strident in tone that I put the book down.

But the book hasn't gone away. Nor has the controversy. That is why the Dawkins and Harris books are best sellers. And this past November a scientific conference took place in La Jolla with this title - *Beyond Belief: Science, Religion, Reason, and Survival*.

So what do you think?

As Passover approaches, are the authors of these new books taking the place of the Seder's proverbial "wicked" child or are they, like the "wise" child, asking honest, critical questions?

Would you like to ask the same questions? Is God a delusion? Would our world be better off without religion?

Would you be interested in reading either the Dawkins or Harris book with me? I'd actually welcome the opportunity to stretch my mind with you. Let me know if you are interested and we'll do some challenging reading together. (markdov@sinai-temple.org)

Saturday Services

Saturday Services at 10:30 a.m.
Mazel Tov To:

March 3 – Leah Winer
Daughter of Barbara and Bruce Winer

March 10 – Hallie Goldstein
Daughter of Patti Goldstein

March 17 – Jacob Lipton
Son of Joanne and Jeff Lipton

March 24 – Eva Landers
Daughter of Elisa and Pat Landers

The Whole Megillah

Friday, March 2
Showcase Shabbat

Saturday, March 3
Comedy Tonight

Sunday, March 4
The Megillah Reading

Saturday Torah Study

Torah Study Saturdays at 9 a.m.

Friday Evenings - Beginning with Showcase Shabbat

SHOWCASE SHABBAT at 6:00 p.m.

March 2

Different options for different people! Young, old, and in between. Dinner reservations are a must.

KABBALAT SHABBAT at 6:00 p.m.

March 9

Veggies and snacks at 5:30 p.m.

FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE at 8:00 p.m.

March 16

L'chaim Shabbat. An evening for wine tasting and joy!

FRIDAY NIGHT MUSIC SERVICE at 8:00 p.m.

March 23

We will honor Brotherhood's choice for the 2007 Snyder Service Award as we also enjoy the music from Seeds of Sun.

FRIDAY NIGHT CLASSIC at 8:00 p.m.

March 30

Getting ready for Pesach.

Shushan Idol 2007

**Reading and chanting as it's never been done before!
Every student will have a performing role in the Megillah!
Songs from the Beatles, Music Man, Wizard of Oz & more!
Plus the crowning of the 2007 Shushan Idol!!!
It could be....any student...any parent....**

Purim Morning The Megillah Reading Sunday, March 4

At 9 a.m.,
Religious School for all students
(Kindergarten to Grade 7).

At 10:45 a.m.,
Parents arrive.

At 11:05 a.m.,
**THE MEGILLAH READING TAKES
PLACE.**

Judaica Shop Corner

Passover is just ahead of us! Come and see our selection of Haggadahs, Seder plates, Matzoh covers, Elijah and Miriam cups, hostess gifts, toys and games.

Starting Sunday March 25th, we'll extend our hours. See our enclosed flyer; and we're always available for special appointments.

Thais Fischel 786-9577 Bobbie Cossin 565-9970

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Mark Dov Shapiro Rabbi
Emily Sleeper Mekler Cantor, Music Director

Officers

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Visit our website: www.sinai-temple.org

JCC Purim Carnival! Sunday, March 4... 12:30 – 3 PM The annual community-wide Purim Carnival

Enjoy inflatables, games, snacks and prizes. The Giggles, made up of a group from JCC's Theatrix, will perform in the lounge. A special early childhood carnival run by the JCC preschool staff will feature age-appropriate activities and prizes. Parents can also sign up children for JCC Summer Camps during the Purim Carnival. For additional information, contact Amy Kimball, 739-4715 ext.322 or akimball@springfieldjcc.org.

Mission Statement

Sinai Temple is a welcoming and inclusive Reform Congregation where our members pursue a continuing journey of Jewish growth. We are guided by the history and traditions of the Jewish people as we encounter the challenges of the modern world. We encourage participation in prayer, life-long Jewish learning, and social justice within a joyful, creative, and compassionate community.

There will be no greggers
at this year's Purim Service!
No noisemakers
at the Megillah Reading
unless you bring them!!!!

Help stamp out Haman's name
And help stamp out hunger at the same time!

Bring a box of Macaroni and Cheese
To the Megillah Reading.

We will shake the noodles as our noisemakers.
Then, we'll donate the food
To the Open Pantry.

No greggers
Unless you bring
Your box (boxes!!!) of
Mac and Cheese.



**PLUS ANOTHER MITZVAH OPPORTUNITY WHEN YOU GET TO
TEMPLE FOR THIS YEAR'S MEGILLAH READING...**

Esther's Baby Boutique will be open for your tzedakah purchases.

Imagine what might happen if Esther weren't in the palace, how would she take care of her family? She might depend on us. Our donations will go to a shelter in Springfield for homeless mothers and children.

*For Celebrating Life's Special
Moments.....*

*~Weddings ~Birthdays
~Bar/Bat Mitzvahs ~Moving
~Birth Announcements ~Thank you notes
~Stationary ~Napkins and more*

*Sinai Temple carries beautiful and unique invitations,
announcements, and stationary. All orders discounted 25%. Easy
to order and a great way to raise money for our temple!*



THE WHOLE MEGILLAH— *A Purim Weekend for Adults, Teenagers, and Kids*

Friday, March 2

5:30 p.m. Wine, Cheese, & Veggies

6:00 p.m. **YOU CHOOSE...**

A Shabbat service Featuring drums and drumming as a means to spirituality

Yoga with Lynne Greene, Heartsong Yoga Center

The Gilded Chamber: A Sumptuous Novel of Queen Esther

A book discussion with Rebecca Kohn, author of *The Gilded Chamber*. If you liked *The Red Tent*, this new novel will bring you into the world of Persia, Esther, and court intrigue. The book is for sale at the Temple.

Spring Training: It's Time to Watch Baseball When America needed heroes, a Jewish slugger stepped to the plate. We'll watch the movie, *The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg*. Temple member, Hal Haberman, will lead the conversation.

7:00 p.m. **Shabbat Dinner:** PLEASE NOTE: DINNER RESERVATIONS ARE ALREADY PAST DUE. IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND DINNER, YOU MUST CALL THE TEMPLE OFFICE TODAY.

7:45 p.m. **YOU CHOOSE...**

For Kids – Arts & Crafts and a Tzedakah Project

For our Youth Groups – Activities of all sorts

For Adults – The Not Ready for Prime Time Purim Players

Improvisation at its best! Sinai members as you've never seen them!

8:30 p.m. Back together for ice cream sundaes, hamantaschen, home-made desserts, and coffee

Saturday, March 3

9:00 – 10:00 a.m. **A Bawdy, Boisterous Torah Study**

An hour of "adult" exploration into the "real" story behind Queen Esther.

7:30 p.m. **Comedy Tonight!** For adults

From The Marx Brothers to Sid Caesar, Alan King, and Billy Crystal, we'll watch some films and tell some jokes for the perfect Purim evening. Costumes are optional but welcome (Real prizes for the best costume.)

Beer, wine, soda, and munchies. Home-made hamantaschen for dessert.

★ **Sunday, March 4 – Purim Day!** ★

The Megillah gets read! Shushan Idol is our theme!!

9:00 a.m. One session of Religious School for all students (Kindergarten to Grade 7)

11:00 a.m. **The WHOLE MEGILLAH**

Reading and chanting as it's never been done before!

Every student will have a role in the Megillah!

Songs from the *Beatles*, *The Music Man*, *The Wizard of Oz* & more

A pie in the face for??

12:00 p.m. Purim lunch is served...Thank you Brotherhood

Is God a delusion? Would our world be better off without religion? See below for the "answers" to these questions

Dear Friends - Two recent books are asking these critical questions. Oxford scientist Richard Dawkins has written, "The God Delusion." Sam Harris has become quite the celebrity with his more popular, "The End of Faith"

If you would like to read one of these books and tackle the question of faith, please let me know. I would welcome some company in probing these authors' ideas. markdov@sinai-temple.org

Greening Your World: A Message from the Social Action Committee

Tikun Olam: To Repair The World! It is in this spirit that the Social Action Committee has taken on the task of informing the congregation of ways in which they can help. Sometimes when many people make small changes—the change can be significant.

At the website: www.ecomail.com/biz/cleaning.htm I found some easy and interesting ways in which you could make a small change. The following is a quote from that site.

Cleaning products can be among the most hazardous chemicals in your home or office and are therefore regulated by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. These products create hazardous waste - threatening human health and the natural environment. Borax, ammonia and baking soda are safe alternatives that can clean and disinfect to meet hospital standards and are much cheaper than name brand cleaners. There are many green products available that are just as effective as traditional ones. Tips:

- Choose products that are biodegradable and non toxic to humans and aquatic life.
- Choose concentrated products, and be sure that they can work in cold water.
- Choose products with VOC concentrations of less than 10% of the weight of the products when diluted for use as directed.
- Choose products with a neutral pH.
- Choose products in recycled, recyclable and refillable containers and packaging.
- Avoid petroleum-derived ingredients. Instead choose surfactants derived from vegetable oil. Look for d-limonene and pine oil solvents.
- Avoid containing EDTA and NTA. Look for alternatives with sodium citrate, sodium bicarbonate, sodium carbonate, and sodium silicate.
- Avoid phosphates, Choose products with a phosphate concentration of 0.5% or less by weight.

The Caring Community of Sinai Temple cordially invites you to attend the

Sinai Senior Members Luncheon Friday, April 6 12:00 noon

There is no charge for this wonderful afternoon.

R.S.V.P to the Temple office 736-3619 no later than March 30

Please let us know if you need transportation.

RIDING4REFORM A Five-Day Fundraiser In Israel for the Israeli Reform Movement

Dear Sinai -

March 18 - 22 I am traveling to Israel to participate in The Ride4Reform. This fund raiser for Reform Judaism in Israel is a 220-mile mostly off-road bike ride, climbing through the heart of Israel,

In order to make congregations like Sinai available to Israelis, I am asking for your support. I have committed to raise at least \$2,000 in contributions for the bike ride, but I'm hoping, with your help, to raise much more. All the money will go directly to Israel's Reform movement. (I am paying my own expenses.)

If you would like more information about the Ride, visit www.riding4reform.org. To make a contribution, please make your U.S. checks payable to "Friends of Israel Movement Progressive Judaism."

Send checks to Sinai (1100 Dickinson Street, Springfield, MA 01108) or to my home, 82 Woodbridge St, South Hadley, MA 01075. If you have more questions, feel free to email AGM@MASSMED.ORG or call me (533-9209).

Thanks so much.

Andy Moskovitz.

• Avoid products containing chlorine bleach or sodium hypochlorite.

Did you know that... Electric dryers account for 5 to 10% of residential energy consumption. Using cold water will save close to 85% of the energy and dollars you use on washing.

You are not obliged to finish the task, nor are you free to neglect it. Pirkei Avot 2:21

**PASSOVER BEGINS MONDAY EVENING,
APRIL 2**

**PASSOVER ENDS AT SUNDOWN,
MONDAY, APRIL 9**

**COME PRAY...COME FILL
THE SANCTUARY PASSOVER MORNING
Tuesday, April 3 at 10:30 a.m.
(Luncheon to follow.)**

This grand service will include special holiday music and an extra opportunity to explore the appeal of our great spring festival.

YIZKOR AND CONCLUDING SERVICE

Monday, April 9 at 10:30 a.m.

We dedicate new plaques on our yearzeit board and bid farewell to Passover.

A luncheon follows the service.

Hosting a Seder.... Being a Guest at a Seder...

If you like lots of people around your Passover table, but your kids have moved away....

OR

If you are new to the area OR your relatives don't live close by

OR

If you are looking for a warm, comfortable, welcoming table to share a Passover experience on Monday, April 2, 2007...

You should join Seder Match and experience Sinai's caring community!!!

Let us know if you are able to be a host or prefer to be a guest.

Send your name to Temple or call Denise Choquette at (413) 552-0784 or Robyn Newhouse at (860) 668-4481 (robyn1860@cox.net) or Susan Goldman (413) 567-7474(sugoldman@aol.com).

A Message From Cantor Emily Sleeper Mekler

Shalom! At this writing, I am still on sabbatical but I wanted you to be aware of some upcoming opportunities and events upon my return mid-March.

First, our Sinai Temple Band is looking for new members NOW! We will be playing next at Sinai's annual Rikudiyah (Israeli Dance Festival) on Friday evening, May 4th at 7 p.m.

In this issue of the bulletin, you will find inserted a sign up sheet with guidelines for prospective new band members. You may either bring/mail the tear-off sheet to Sinai Temple or you may email your application to temple member, David Mernoff (yes he's Karen's husband!) at dbmernoff@comcast.net. David will be compiling the information in my absence. Don't delay in responding so we can contact you soon with the rehearsal schedule for this event. We will probably have 4 or so rehearsals. Please note the band participation stipulations of "AT LEAST 3 years' current playing experience, with good music reading and/or improvisational skills." So, pull out your instrument, start playing some scales and let us know you'll play with us. You will be guaranteed a fun time making music with multi-generations of fellow Sinai Temple families.

Friday evening, March 23rd musician Mattan Klein of the Israeli style trio "Seeds of Sun" will come to Sinai Temple to enhance our Shabbat worship. They have played internationally. They will accompany the music of our service and then present a sermon-in-song.

On Sunday evening, April 15th Sinai Temple will host the annual community-wide observance of Yom Hashoa. Our Sinai Temple Adult Choir will join forces with Mak'hela, the Western Massachusetts Jewish chorus. Hope to see you there.

See you when I return from sabbatical.

Cantor Emily Sleeper Mekler

Dates to remember:

MAKING HAMENTASHEN

February 28 from 7:00 - 9:00 PM

March 1 from 9:00 - 11:00 AM

Club Alef-Bet (1st & 2nd graders) March 18

Club Gimel-Dalet (3rd & 4th graders) March 25

Bagels & Blocks (preschoolers and parents) March 25

The Caring Community is here for you. If you have any news to share, please let us know by calling the temple office. We're here to help.

From the Director of Education Sheila Shear

Welcome Spring! Or, at least the thought of spring weather. What an exciting month coming up! The 9th graders will soon be heading off to Washington D.C. to the Religious Action Center to learn how our Reform Jewish lobby responds to current issues before congress. Our 8th grade and adult SPARK participants are working on some great projects and our 6th grade will soon be preparing for their retreat which will take place near the end of April. The fifth graders are continuing their Yachday (School to School) cultural exchange with their friends in Afulah and we have fifth and seventh grade PACTs coming up this month. Our Kindergarten through fourth graders will soon begin their preparation for Pesach. We hope we will see many of our students at the Passover morning service on Tuesday, April 3rd at 10:30. There will also be a fourth grade PACT on Sunday, April 8th. As you can see, we not only have spring on our minds, but a spring in our step. We are still looking for volunteers to help out with our Hebrew classes. Once, once a month or once a week, you'll love it. Please call the Religious School office to let us know when you would like to come.

Sinai's Named Funds

There are many named funds that one can contribute to at Sinai. Many of us know/knew the people for whom they are named, but none of us knows/knew everyone. I thought that it would be interesting to learn about the people whose names are on a fund, and why that specific fund was established.

Belle Rita Novak

This month we profile the Zelma and Richard Lavin Endowment Fund

In the fall of 1988 Peter Roth and Zel chaired the campaign to make Sinai congregants aware of the need for an Endowment Foundation. Zel's belief is that the prerequisite for soliciting funds is for the solicitor to first make his or her own contribution. As Zel and Dick's 40th anniversary was drawing near, they decided to start their own named fund. They knew that family and friends would want to celebrate with them by adding to their fund.

For 18 years, Zel has watched this fund increase and is proud that it helps insure the strength of Sinai Temple and its future. On many occasions family and friends have contributed in honor of their family, in memory of Dick, for holidays, birthdays, and yahrzeits.

Zel contributes for the yahrzeits of her family members. When she is honoring people who have their own funds, she prefers to contribute to their named funds. It is a source of pride for her that those who have started their own funds can feel the same pride that she does.

For High School and College students A Summer Program Making Money; The Susan M. Broh Tikkun Olam Award

This summer Sinai Temple invites students to get involved with tikkun olam – repairing the world. We would like to underwrite students who choose to spend their summer in a project that enriches the world. Interested students can get involved by thinking of a project or an area of interest. Those who are selected will be paid a salary of approximately \$7.50 an hour. (College students living outside the Pioneer Valley are welcome to find a project wherever they'll be spending the summer.)

A full application is available by calling the Temple office.

The Andy Berger Art Contest 2007 For Young People From Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade

You are invited to participate in our Seventh Art Contest in memory of Andy Berger. All subjects in all areas of Judaism from holidays to the home to Israel are welcome. Possible media include water colors, paint, markers, collage, or clay. There will be separate categories for different age groups with age appropriate prizes. Submit your work by mid-March. Prizes awarded at our Family Service on Friday, April 6.

Actors Needed for Israel Independence Day — Auditions: March 15, 7-9 p.m.

We are seeking actors for an open call audition. Performances will be held April 22 and 23rd, in celebration of Israel Independence Day.

Actors from 5th grade through adults are needed for this family-friendly production. Auditions will be held on Thursday, March 15th from 7:00 – 9:00 PM at the Springfield Jewish Community Center, 1160 Dickinson St. For more information please email Hilary Buxbaum, Hilarybuxbaum@verizon.net.

Are You or a Loved One Recuperating from an Illness or Injury?

Spectrum Home Health Care, a program of Jewish Geriatric Services and based in Longmeadow, is dedicated to providing adults of all ages and faiths with a full range of professional rehabilitation and healthcare services, delivered in the privacy and comfort of their own home. The agency offers skilled nursing services, physical, occupational and speech-language therapies, home health aides, home monitoring of vital signs through its Telemedicine program, and medical social services. For more information on Spectrum Home Health Care and its services, you can call (413) 567-4600 or visit www.spectrumhomehealthcare.com.

From the Brotherhood President Dan Cohn

As of this writing, we still have not settled on the recipient for the Rabbi Snyder award. Bear in mind that you are reading this in March, and I am writing it in the midst of a cold snap in early February. We will be deciding at our next meeting. We received a great many ballots this year, many more than in years past, and that is both a bane and a blessing. I am truly happy to see that so many of you are getting active in Brotherhood again, but because there are so many worthy candidates it makes our decision that much more difficult.

Join us on March 23rd when we present the award. Make your reservations early so you can join us at the dinner, and then stay for what will be a truly wonderful service. Not only is the Brotherhood going to be there, but a fantastic Israeli musical group, Seeds of the Sun will be performing. I assure you that even with all this going on the service will not take any longer than usual...well probably not, anyway.

On May 20th is an event that is always highly anticipated. That is when we are holding this year's Brotherhood Raffle. "Wait a minute," they cry! "We thought you were having a silent auction!!!" Well, we were, but it turned out to be far too large an undertaking for those few that stepped up to the plate to help out, so we're back to square one. There is one fairly significant change this year, however. Instead of the grand prize being a trip to Walt Disney World, we will be giving away a nice, new 42" wide screen HD television set! Tickets are available in the office, or feel free to give me a call.

Shalom, everybody!

Dan Cohn

dcohn@sinaibrotherhood.org

Get Your Name in the Sinai Temple Engagement Calendar

You may not get your name in lights, but you can get it in print. Just get yourself listed as a "Friend of Sinai" and you'll be famous in the engagement calendar we publish every summer. While you're at it, you can also list your family's special dates...anniversaries, birthdays, yahrzeits, and anything else that you want to share. One year a good "friend" listed his dog's birthday! It was June 24.

For \$18 you can be a Friend; for \$36 you are a Super Friend; and for more, you can be a Benefactor for \$50 - and I'll come sing "Hey, Big Spender" to you! Fill out a form today or call the Temple office to get your name in print. Be famous!

Belle-Rita Novak

Message from the President Steve Weiss

While I did not write for last month's bulletin, the Board of Directors has been busy this winter, and I thought I would share some of the activities with you as we move into the new year.

It's hard to believe, but I'm now in the last few months of my two-year term as President, and we're at a juncture that many of the things that the Board is discussing now will not come to pass until after my term is over. As many of you already know, Dave Roberts is in line to be my successor in the next fiscal year starting June 1st. Those of you who know Dave won't be at all surprised to know that he's already starting to look toward Sinai's future, especially on matters relating to membership and dues. At our most recent board meetings, we're starting a series of conversations that are designed to explore some of the "big picture" issues so that we can develop priorities for the next few years (and then strategies to fulfill these priorities). We expect that these meetings will culminate in a session facilitated by a representative from the URJ this spring. Obviously, this is a process that won't be finished in one or two meetings, and I'm sure the priorities will evolve over time.

Sinai's leadership is working to create at Sinai's future in other, more specific ways. The Board recently unanimously endorsed the Religious School's proposal to move to single session Sundays; this, obviously, is a momentous (and exciting) change. The Legacy Society is renewing its efforts to facilitate planned giving to ensure Sinai's future. The Membership and Retention Committee is in the process of rolling out a new package for prospective new members. And this is the time of year when the Nominating Committee (chaired by Linda Kay) is putting together the slate of officers and directors for next year, and when the budget for the next year is being developed.

These activities often take place largely behind the scenes; but they're the "nuts and bolts" of maintaining and enhancing our Sinai community. Thanks go to all the Board and Committee members who make this possible.

Thank you to:

Matthew Shaw, for a special donation in honor of his parents, Paul and Laraine Shore-Suslowitz.

Mazal Tov to:

Dr. Kimberly Smith on her engagement to Kevin Gerber. Kimberly's parents are Marilyn and Sherman Smith.



Cookie Dough and Cheesecake Fundraiser Support Sinai Temple Religious School



The Sinai Temple Religious School will be offering a frozen Cookie Dough and frozen Cheesecake as our primary Fund Raiser from March 4, 2007 through March 25, 2007. Your order will arrive on Thursday April 12, 2007 and must be picked up between 4:00 pm and 6:00 pm. Brochures and order forms will be sent home with your child on Sunday March 4, 2007.

For the convenience of those congregates without school aged children, we have enclosed the order form insert in this month's Sinai Bulletin. This is our largest and most critical fundraising event to support the fun and learning at Sinai Temple Religious School for the year. We thank you for your commitment to our children's learning and your continuing support of Jewish Education at Sinai!