

Sinai Temple

BULLETIN



For Your Consideration

Rabbi Mark Dov Shapiro

It happens to me every time I spend time with someone who is passionate about living in Israel. I emerge from the conversation wanting to make another visit to Israel myself.

That's what happened last month when Rabbi Tammy Kolberg visited us at Sinai Temple. Rabbi Kolberg heads up a Reform congregation in Tel Aviv, and her stories about creating a meaningful liberal Jewish life in Israel touched me deeply. There was something inspirational about the struggle that she and her congregants wage as they mold Judaism together with the demands of a fast-paced, ever-changing Jewish state.

Of course, there is much to worry about, and Rabbi Kolberg's strength was that she never denied the challenges facing Israel. She criticized the Palestinians for their stubbornness over the years, but she also declared that Israel had made many mistakes. She was also most forceful in warning us that Israel's disengagement from Gaza may provoke a schism in Israel unlike anything we have ever seen. Although she did not use the words "civil war," she certainly wanted us to know that Israel's departure from Gaza this July will be an extremely difficult task.

When it comes to Israel, there is always room for worry.

And yet - as I said - whenever I become involved in a conversation about Israel, I find myself wanting to get back there for another look.

I want to see what is growing and blossoming there.

As Yom Ha-Atzmaut/Israel Independence Day approaches on May 11, I want to celebrate the renewal of Jewish self-determination.

I am even looking forward to planning a congregational trip to Israel for next year. The last Sinai trip went in 1995 so the time has certainly arrived.

Details will follow. Who knows what current events will also follow.

No matter, I'm eager to lead a trip to Israel. Many of you have expressed interest already. Let me know what you're thinking. Perhaps next year - in 2006 - we can celebrate Yom Ha-Atzmaut in Israel itself!

Saturday Services

MAZAL TOV TO BNAI MITZVAH
Saturday services at 10:30 a.m.

May 7 - Kayla Gordon
Daughter of Bruce & Mary Gordon

May 14 - Benjamin Cowan
Son of Scott Cowan & Janine Idelson

May 21 - Louis Katz
Son of Marc & Lisa Katz

May 28 - Stephanie Dionisi
Daughter of Cheryl Dionisi

Mitzvah Day Sunday, May 15

For young and old, for everyone.
A day of volunteer opportunities.

A Family Service Experiment

We're starting the May and June
Family Service one half hour earlier

FRIDAY EVENING SERVICES...NEW TIMES!!!

A NEW TIME FAMILY SERVICE at 7:00 p.m.

May 6

Shabbat Ha-Moreh - TEACHER APPRECIATION.

Let's say a giant thank you to our teachers!!

KABBALAT SHABBAT at 6:00 p.m.

May 13

Veggies & drink at 5:30 followed by the
sweetest hour in 01108.

CONFIRMATION at 8:00 p.m.

May 20

We're so proud. Please help honor our finest High Schoolers.
Plus the Aufruf of Shelley Lavin and Jacob Barandes.

FRIDAY NIGHT CLASSIC at 8:00 p.m.

May 27

Our best "traditional" service.

TORAH STUDY EVERY SATURDAY MORNING AT 9 A.M.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR
CONFIRMATION 2005/5765 FRIDAY, MAY 20, AT 8:00 P.M.
 AT SINAI TEMPLE

WE WOULD LOVE TO SHARE OUR LEARNING WITH YOU!

- Josh Auerbach, son of Harry and Karen Auerbach
- Matthew Berg, son of Eric and Margie Berg
- Sean Brenker, son of Kevin and Diane Brenker
- Anna Cohn, daughter of Dan and Maggie Cohn
- Sarah Dickstein, daughter of Howard and Sally Dickstein
- Natalie Drucker, daughter of Barry Drucker
- Kristine Fox, daughter of Richard and Holly Fox
- Sydney Greenberg, daughter of Elliot and Janice Greenberg
- David Miller, son of Joseph Hershon and Rina Miller
- Alexa Weiner, daughter of Gary and Candy Weiner
- Jessica Winer, daughter of Bruce and Barbara Winer

Honoring:
Ruth Weiss
Susan Weiss Firestone
William Firestone

Rabbi Stanley M. Davids
Keynote Speaker

President of ARZA, The Association of Reform
 Zionists of America and formerly of Sinai Temple

Thursday, May 19, 2005
10 Iyar 5765

Sinai Temple
 1100 Dickinson Street
 Springfield, Massachusetts

Dietary laws Observed

Sponsor \$118 Friend \$150 Patron \$200

5:45 p.m. Reception
 6:30 p.m. Dinner & Program
 Live Auction
 R.S.V.P. May 2, 2005

All proceeds will benefit the Heritage Academy Scholarship Fund.

Builders Needed For "Rebuilding Together" Sunday, May 1

Sinai is joining forces with the churches of Forest Park to rehab a house in Forest Park. We need 15 volunteers for the day. It's like Habitat for Humanity - except it's only one day. We'll be working along with members of the various churches. To volunteer, please call the Temple office or call Howard Dickstein at 567-8371. This will be our third year of co-operative building. It's been a success twice before. Come join us for Build #3!!

The Sinai Temple Bulletin is published monthly by Sinai Temple, Springfield, Massachusetts.

Mark Dov Shapiro Rabbi
 Emily Sleeper Mekler Cantor, Music Director

Officers

Jim Aronson	President
Steve Weiss	Vice President
Linda Kay	Vice President
Marlene Gordon	Vice President
Alan Gorfin	Treasurer
Susan Shepard	Financial Secretary
Leah Berger-Sternbane	Recording Secretary
Mike Bader	Membership Chair
Dave Roberts	Cemetery Chair
Dan Cohn	Brotherhood

Visit our website: www.sinai-temple.org

Adult Opportunities

Torah Study: A Perfect Way to Start the Weekend Saturdays at 9 a.m.

We are studying the Torah Portion of the week, proceeding through the Torah in order. Everyone at any level of knowledge is welcome. The group meets in the Oneg Shabbat Room from 9 to 10 a.m. Bagels and coffee are part of the deal!

Monthly Morning Service Wednesday, May 4 at 7:30 a.m.

A chance to start your day with a different focus. We meet on the bimah for a service of 20 minutes. Breakfast follows. Those who need to leave for the rest of the day are free no later than 8:15 a.m. Next month's "morning minyan" services will take place on Wednesday, June 1.

First Thursdays: Lunch and Learn Thursday, May 5 12:00 – 1:15 p.m.

Bring your lunch to the Oneg Shabbat room for a discussion of contemporary Jewish concern with Rabbi Shapiro. Next month's discussions will take place on June 2.

Jewish Religion and America: Where are we Going? Rabbi Mark Shapiro Tuesday, May 10 at 7:30 p.m. At the JCC

Springfield's Rabbinic Fellowship is presenting a seminar on the future of Jews in America. Rabbi Shapiro will be presenting a lecture on the future with responses from Rabbi Marc Rudolph of Congregation Bnai Jacob & Rabbi Robert Sternberg of the Hatikvah Holocaust Resource Center.

A Giant Thank You for Friday Night Live Sponsorship!

For several years, our Friday Night Live services have meant enhanced music. The funds that have allowed us to bring instrumentalists into the Temple on a regular basis have been from a generous grant by **The Jack & Pauline Freeman Foundation, Inc.** Friday Night Live's existence depends on the Freeman Foundation. Thank you for the support!

Should Sinai have a regular Saturday morning service?

Whenever there is a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Sinai, there is a service. But how about those Saturday mornings when there is no Bar/Bat Mitzvah? Or how about times when you might consider a Saturday morning service, but you're not sure if you're welcome at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah? Should Sinai have a regular Saturday morning service? Should it take place every week whether or not there is a Bar/Bat Mitzvah? Should the regular service take place in a separate place at a separate time from the sanctuary service with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah or should the "regular" service always take place in the sanctuary at 10:30?

What are your thoughts? Are you interested in further conversation?

If you've got some ideas, please share them with Jeff Ochs, Ritual Committee Chair. Jeff is at 567-2104. You can also call the Rabbi or the Cantor. Nothing is planned yet. But your thoughts are welcome as the Ritual Committee considers these important questions.

Adult Bar/Bat Mitzvah: Are You Interested in Joining the Class? Saturdays, May 4, 11, 18, 25; June 4, 11, 18 8 to 9 a.m.

Dear Congregants:

Our FOURTH CLASS of men and women who want to become **Bar or Bat Mitzvah as adults** began meeting last Fall. We had a wonderful time. After a winter break, we are now back and ready to study.

It's not too late for YOU. If you would like to see what it's all about, come to one of the May/June sessions. We meet in the Oneg Shabbat Room. Breakfast is served.

Don't be shy. Contact the Rabbi or the Temple office (736-3619) or e-mail the Rabbi at markdov@sinai-temple.org.

Tzevet Mitzvot: Israel Mitzvah Corps, July 3-14, 2005

Are you interested in traveling to Israel this summer? Passionate about social justice? Willing to roll up your sleeves and work side by side with Israeli activists? If so, join the Commission on Social Action, ARZA and the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism (IMPJ) for an educational and inspiring program that will combine learning about social justice issues, study, travel, meetings with Israelis and a variety of hands-on mitzvah work. For more information, go to the Commission on Social Action at the website of the Union for Reform Judaism...www.urj.org.

Honoring The Sustaining Membership Program 2004-2005

This year's Sustaining Membership Program has been a wonderful success. We are truly grateful to the many households who stepped forward to renew their involvement or to become sustaining members for the first time.

As of mid-April a new plaque has been added to the Temple lobby. The names of those who have become Sustaining Members will be displayed on a yearly basis. Thank you for your generosity and commitment.

Sinai Temple's Annual Congregation Meeting Tuesday, June 7 At 7:30 p.m.

**If you are a member of Sinai Temple,
this is the place to be for our annual review
of what has happened in the last year and
what lies ahead for the coming year.**

Social Action Committee Tuesday, May 31 at 7:30 p.m.

The Social Action Committee meets several times a year to plan a range of activities based on the Jewish principles of Tikkun Olam and Tzedakah. Some of our projects are well known to the congregation - The Shoes That Fit, Get On Our Case, The Alden Baptist-Sinai Exchange, Esther's Boutique and much more. At the moment we are especially busy with helping "our" Somali family to adapt to the USA and planning for Sinai's 75th Anniversary events (chaired by Saul Finestone and Jackie Neiman). There are lots and lots of options for you to participate - including this year's Mitzvah Day (chaired by Sue Chanin). We welcome your participation and ideas. Please call Ronnie Leavitt at 567-0558 or the Sinai office at 736-3619 if you would like to join our committee.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 31 at 7:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome to join us for future planning.

Mission ~~is~~ possible???

We are embarking on a new initiative for Sinai Temple — the creation of a mission statement.

A mission statement helps direct the pulse of the temple. It is the precise statement of the purpose and function of a synagogue. This statement will help set Sinai Temple apart from other congregations. It will help us define who we are and give us direction as we look to the future.

A well thought out, vibrant mission statement can be extremely powerful. It reflects the basic, rock bottom values of a given congregation. It speaks to the hearts and minds of its members. It fortifies the commitment of existing members and encourages others who are unaffiliated to join. It provides a guiding star by which to steer the institution through the present and into the future. It lifts mundane congregational business to the sphere of the holy. However, a mission statement is not magical. To be effective, it must truly represent the congregants' feelings and must actually used.

In the process of accomplishing this goal we want to listen to as many voices from our temple as we can.

Watch for upcoming notices about our committee's work. The official kickoff will be at the Rosh Hashanah 2005 services. Please let us hear your voice.

Marlene Gordon
Leah Sternbane



SAVE THE DATE!!!!

as the
Western MA State of Israel Bonds

pays tribute to our own

Carol and David Roberts

at a Cocktail Buffet

with guest speaker **Dr. Ellen Cannon**

**Wednesday, June 8, 2005
6:30 P.M.**

at Chez Josef in Agawam

Invitation to follow

For information call the Israel Bonds office at 800-916-1918

A Birthday Celebration for Israel

Please join us in celebration of Israel's 57th birthday on **Sunday, May 15th** from **1-5pm** for a **Community-Wide Yom Ha'Atzmaut Celebration** at the JCC. This event will feature fun family activities from local Jewish organizations, Israeli food, and an Israeli style sing-a-long and concert by Israel musicians, the Dekel Bor Trio and friends.

Fifth through eighth graders have a special opportunity to meet a local Israel Defense Forces (IDF) veteran for a **Gadna program** from 1:15-3:00 p.m. This program will highlight some of the physical and mental challenges faced by members of the IDF, through a variety of team building activities designed to introduce participants to the experience of Israeli soldiers.

Post-Passover Mimuna Festival

Springfield Jewish
Community Center
Sunday, May 1st
9:00 – 11:00 PM

Sponsored by the Anna P. Housen
Israel Desk and the JCC

The JCC and Israel Desk will co-sponsor an evening of entertainment and "club atmosphere" for adults by celebrating the traditional Israeli farewell to Passover called "Mimuna." Brought to Israel by Moroccan Jews, Mimuna has flourished in Israel as an evening of music, dancing, and the eating of Moroccan pastry. We celebrate Mimuna in style with our Israeli cousins. Celebration includes live guitar music and authentic Moroccan-Israeli dancing with dance professional Yossi Mastey.

Just a Few Words from Karen Mernoff

I can't believe it's already May. Sinai Temple Religious School has been quite the place to be during the last several months. March and April programming seemed to be non-stop; PACTS, Grade 3 and Grade 5 weddings, Bagels and Blocks, the Grade 6 retreat, model seders and more! And who can forget - that incredible Grade 6 Creative Service! All the teachers and aides have been busy with special activities for all the grades. They have been working diligently with the students all year. On Friday, May 6th at 7:00 p.m, during Family Services, please join us for teacher appreciation; a chance to honor and thank the teachers and aides for a wonderful school year. All families are encouraged to attend.

On another note, it is my pleasure to announce that the Jewish Federation of Greater Springfield increased its allocation to Sinai Temple Religious School for the 2004-2005 school year. The Federation exceeded its 2004 Campaign goal which enabled the Federation to increase its allocation. This funding enables us to continue a high level of programming for our school. Thank you Jewish Federation!

Also I wanted to share with you a letter that we received recently from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee:

Dear Students:

It is our pleasure to acknowledge your contribution of \$150.00 in support of South Asia Tsunami Relief.

It is wonderful that you have chosen to help others through this special example of tzedakah .

Thanks to your generosity, JDC is already at work with partners on the ground to provide urgently needed emergency supplies. Further, JDC has senior field people in India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Indonesia assessing needs in order to develop additional programs. JDC also plans to use our expertise in the long-term rebuilding efforts, which will occur over the coming months. Donors like you who display such generosity are of critical importance as you allow us to respond to the short- and long-term needs of those who were affected by this natural disaster. Please follow our progress by viewing www.jdc.org.

Your good deed enables us to do this important work. Each of you should be very proud of this special gesture.

Sincerely,

*Judge Ellen M. Heller
President*

*Betsy Sheerr
Chair of Non-Sectarian
Program Committee*

*Steven Schwager
Executive Vice-President*

Please remember May and June Family Services will begin at 7:00 p.m.

If you have not yet registered your child for the 2005 - 2006 school year, please send in your registration form now.

Bagels and Blocks



Preschoolers and their parents learn together at the Bagels and Blocks session on March 20th.

6th Grade Creative Service



The sixth grader did a wonderful job leading the creative service on Friday, April 1st.

Got Milk?

Sure you do — in your refrigerator — and I also bet that you have the form for FRIENDS OF SINAI. Not in the refrigerator, of course, but probably in your desk or on the bureau...or maybe in that miscellaneous drawer in the kitchen where some things languish and are forgotten — like coupons that have expired dates.

Of course, if you have already mailed the form (with check) — Bless you!!

Now, if you haven't — I understand, you lead a busy life and have lots to do. But won't you please take a minute and find that form, fill it out, and mail it (with check)? You'll feel so much better knowing that your name will be in the Sinai Temple Calendar Book amongst all the others who really care.

Thank you all,
Bea Sussman

Sharing Our Joy.... Mazal Tov To:

Tony and Esta Sobey on the engagement of their daughter, Melissa, to Daniel Radin.

Alan and Bonnie Gorfin on the engagement of their son, Michael, to Briana Martin.

Sandra Lotterman on the birth of her newest grandchild, Nathan Ryan, brother of Alexa. The proud parents are Lori Lotterman and Gary Kushner.

Lynn Hurley, Leah Simon-Berger, Roberta Hillenberg-Gang and Neva Frumkin on their trip to Israel with the Hadassah Leadership Academy.

Greetings from Diane Freidberg



MARCH must be the busiest month at Sinai!

Club Alef-Bet and Club Gimel-Dalet

A very BIG THANK YOU to Lynn Hurley for running two outstanding programs for us in March. Parents, we have a very creative and talented bunch of kids. At Club Alef-Bet Kayla Mernoff, Abby Solomon, Andrew Katz, Dylan Helmus, Ari Awad, Gabriel Awad, Hannah Calabrese, Alex Calabrese, Colin Hurley, Danielle Goldstein, Lauren Stone, Jesse Cohen-Lindfors, Lucy Leavitt, and Josh Ehrlich showed their talents. And at Club Gimel-Dalet April Solon, Leah Brush, Shaina Goodzit, Eric Gibson, Jenna Friedberg, Matt Cooper, Casey Plumb, Rachel Sherman, Maddy Cohen, Hannah Gordon and Casey Coen produced masterpieces.

But, it is possible that the kids had the most fun wearing their masks and making enough noise to bring down Sinai Temple every time Haman's name was mentioned. Not to mention playing "Grogger Chairs", "Haman Says..." and "Esther says..." and many other games adapted specially for Purim and the use of groggers. Thanks to our teen helpers Sarah Chaet, Julia Brenker and Tyler Morrissette, for keeping the kids moving.

Lynn we really appreciate the thought you put into the programs, your time and your expertise.



HAMANTASCHEN BAKING AND PURIM

Another BIG THANK YOU to Kim Black for putting together an awesome team! Kim, thanks for your time and effort putting this all together and making it all run so smoothly.



Thank you to: Our dough makers: Bonnie Engelman, Tricia Freedman, Barbara Fitzgerald, Candy Stillerman, Lynn Solomon, Jodie Foster, Pam Kalman, Diane Friedberg, Kim Black, and Barbara Winer.

Our bakers: Bonnie Engelman, Tricia Freedman, Melanie Stone, Berenice and Cecil Michelow (Diane Friedberg's parents) and Diane Friedberg.

Our box sealers and postage stampers: Joan Lissauer, Hermine Weston and Diane Friedberg.

And the rest of our team- box makers: Nick Katz and student aides; placing mailing labels on boxes done by the Confirmation Class; packing boxes by our fifth grade classes.

The team baked at least 500 Hamantashen and packed 167 Mishloach Manot! Boxes were sent to Sinai's Alumni, Empty Nesters and New Members and we think a few other random Temple members may have received a box too. Hope you enjoyed the contents! Each box contained one of the delicious hamantashen that we baked, a box of raisins and a letter with an explanation of the Mishloach Manot signed by the fifth grader who packed the box. Thank you to Phyllis Katz and Stacey Osowski, fifth grade teachers for their help with this Mitzvah.

The rest of the hamantashen were handed out to the Religious School children, teachers and some lucky parents who came in to pick up their kids!



MORE THANK YOU'S to Leah Sternbane, Zel Lavin and Adele Citron for being there for our members in times of need, making and delivering meals and providing transportation.

MITZVAH DAY - MAY 15th.

Look inside this bulletin for the bright orange insert. Please make your Mitzvah Day selections and return your form ASAP. Let us know if you would like to run a program on Mitzvah day.

FAMILY GAME NIGHT UPDATE

For those of you who attended Family Game Night, you will recall that we held a raffle and raised \$104 that we donated to The Open Pantry. Here is their response:

"Dear Ms. Friedberg,

Thank you for your very generous donation to Open Panty Community Services, Inc of \$104 raised from your raffle. In our continuing struggle to maintain our services, your concern and support for those who are less fortunate is very welcome and much appreciated.

As more and more people reach a crisis in their lives where they need to utilize one or more of our programs, contributions such as yours give us the ability to assist them while they try to get back on their feet again.

Your generous donation will help ease the burden of some of our community's less fortunate, bringing a ray of hope where it is most needed. On behalf of the people we serve, thank you for your kindness.

Peace,

Kevin J. Noonan
Executive Director
Open Pantry Community Services, Inc.
Springfield, MA"

Teen Initiative Program Director

The Harold Grinspoon Foundation is seeking a full time director for its Teen Initiative. The director will assist participating synagogues and organizations in Western MA in the development of vibrant teen programs. The position requires an energetic individual who will create and initiate innovative programs and provide guidance and professional development opportunities for youth educators. The director will serve as liaison between the foundation and the synagogues/programs. The position also requires grant management and budgeting experience.

Training and experience in Jewish communal or youth work preferred.

Salary commensurate with experience. Please send resume to Beverly Pava, Harold Grinspoon Foundation, 380 Union Street, West Springfield, MA 01089.



Emily Ehrlich (left) and Hannah Grayboff (right) in front of the Massachusetts pillar at the WWII Memorial in Washington, DC. They were in Washington for a High School seminar on Judaism and Politics.

Nominating Committee Report

Pursuant to the Sinai Temple Bylaws, President Jim Aronson appointed the following individuals to serve on the 2005 Nominating Committee: Jim Aronson, Howard Dickstein, Rina Miller, Carol Roberts, Rabbi Mark Shapiro, and Steve Weiss.

At the February meeting of the Sinai Temple Board of Directors, the Nominating Committee submitted, and the Board approved the following slate of candidates for election at the June 7, 2005 Congregational Meeting:

Executive Committee positions commencing June 1, 2005 through May 31, 2007:

President: Steve Weiss
First Vice President: Dave Roberts
Vice President: Elliot Greenberg
Vice President: Roberta Hillenberg-Gang
Treasurer: Alan Gorfin
Financial Secretary: Susan Shepherd
Recording Secretary: Ann Jacobs

Board positions commencing June 1, 2005 through May 31, 2006:

Judy Cohen
George Dickstein

Board positions commencing June 1, 2005 through May 31, 2007:

Marlene Gordon
Judy Schweiger

Board positions commencing June 1, 2005 through May 31, 2008:

Nick Ciciretti	Diane Friedberg
Susan Goldman	Peter Greenberg
Andy Moskovitz	Bea Sussman
Sandi Suib-Dutcher	

Pursuant to Article V, Section 3 of the Sinai Temple Bylaws, notice is hereby given to the members of Sinai Temple that this slate will be presented for election at the annual meeting of the Congregation on June 7, 2005 to be held at Sinai Temple. Additional nominations may be made in writing at least 14 days prior to this meeting by petition of at least 20 persons entitled to vote at meetings of the Congregation who are in good standing.

Gurland Human Relations Award Recipient

This year's recipient of the Rabbi Jerome Gurland Human Relations Award is **The Gandara Center's Youth Leaders in Action**. This organization is a free after-school leadership program for middle and high school youth in Springfield. Through creative arts, performance, community service projects, guest presentations and workshops, youth develop leadership skills and address important health issues facing young people in Springfield including: substance abuse, sexual health, HIV/AIDS, media literacy, diversity, conflict resolution, and informed decision-making. This year youth participants are reaching out to the community through the creation of public service announcements, community murals, a teen magazine, and a youth-created calendar designed to highlight the positive contributions of youth leadership in Springfield. **Sinai Temple's Human Relations Award will support the production of YLA's 2005-2006 calendar which will be widely distributed throughout the Springfield community.**

The Human Relations Award given by Sinai Temple was established in honor of Rabbi Gurland several years ago. Every year our Human Relations Award Committee sends out applications to hundreds of organizations in Springfield. We invite anyone who has a proposal for improving the quality of life in our community to make application for the award. Out of all this year's applications, **The Gandara Center's Youth Leaders in Action** was chosen because of its proven success of providing an opportunity for young people to make positive changes in their community.

A HOME CEREMONY FOR REMEMBERING THE HOLOCAUST FROM RABBI SHAPIRO

Dear Friends:

When Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Memorial Day) starts on the 27th of Nisan, the **evening of Thursday, May 5, 2005**, there is something simple and beautiful which you can do to commemorate the Holocaust. You can purchase and light a Yahrzeit/Memorial Candle in your home.

At that time, you might want to have a moment of silence, use the prayer that follows, or create something of your own. My family and I have used a yahrzeit candle for this purpose and found it to be a very moving experience. I hope you will allow the yahrzeit candle to become a new tradition for your household as well

A limited number of candles will be available at the Temple office if you wish to pick one up there. You can also purchase a candle at a grocery store.

A Prayer for Lighting the “Holocaust Candle”

I/we light this memorial candle in order not to forget the lives of the Jewish men, women, and children who are symbolized by its flame. They were brutalized for no reason; their lives were taken in cruelty. May we be inspired to learn about our six million brothers and sisters as individuals and as communities; and may we recall not only the terror of their deaths, but the splendor of so many of their lives. May the memory of their lives inspire us to hallowour own lives, and to live meaningful Jewish lives so that we may help to ensure that part of who they were always endures.\

Yom Hashoah Community Holocaust Remembrance Day “Preserving the Memory”

*Thursday, May 5,
at Congregation B’nai Jacob, 7:30 p.m.*

The Community Yom HaShoah Commemoration, sponsored by the Hatikvah Holocaust Education Center, will take place on Thursday, May 5, 2005, at 7:30 p.m.

For further information, please call Rabbi Bob Sternberg, Program Director at (413) 734-7701.

SHAVUOT

**Erev Shavuot
Sunday, June 12 at 7:30 p.m.**

An evening of learning with delicious food & wine. Stay tuned.

**Shavuot Morning
Monday morning, June 13 at 10:30 a.m.**

A beautiful morning service with Yizkor followed by lunch.

Brotherhood

May is here, and the summer is fast approaching. Events here at the Synagogue seem to be winding down. What we all really need is a night out with no strings attached. Something that isn't an award ceremony, or a Bar or Bat mitzvah. Something where we aren't expected to bring a little something, a gift for the hostess, or a wedding gift, or whatever...

Well the Brotherhood has the answer. We are throwing a party! What's the occasion, you ask? There is no occasion! No special name, no gifts, no hot dogs, and ABSOLUTELY NO COST TO YOU! You are all invited to a bash thrown by us!

We are going to have a professionally catered buffet, and we are hiring a jazz combo for dancing. There will even be a dance instructor there to help out those of you that are "gracefully challenged." Did I mention that there's going to be a cash bar, too?

So come one, come all. Dust off your dancing shoes, find your nicest dining and dancing clothes, and give Arlene a call at the office to make a reservation. We will be taking people at the door...there is no charge, after all, but we'd kind of like to be able to give the caterer a number in advance, so help us out, here.

So mark June 4th on your calendars!

Shalom, everybody
Dan Cohn
dcohn@telecomguru.org
[please add the following in a separate box below my article]

Brotherhood Throws a Party!

Come one, come all!!

Join us on Saturday, June 4th

7:00PM 'till ???

Dinner! Dancing! Free!!!

Please call Arlene at the office as soon as possible to make a reservation.

We will be limiting attendance, so the sooner you reserve, the better.

Our Rabbis Respond: Is America Good for the Jews?

*Moderated by Rabbi Jonathan
Perlman*

Tuesdays, May 3, 10, 17

This three-week series is a presentation by the Springfield Rabbinic Fellowship celebrating the 350th anniversary of Jewish life in America. We will review our accomplishments, take our spiritual pulse, and make predictions for the future in a no-holds barred panel conversation of rabbis and academics.

All sessions are free and open to the public.

"Jewish Culture and America, the New Babylon?"

Tuesday, May 3 at 7:30 p.m.

Presenter: Dr. Donald Webber, Mount Holyoke College
Respondents: Rabbi Herbert Schwartz and Rabbi Fred Hyman

"Jewish Religion and America: Where Are We Now?"

Tuesday, May 10 at 7:30 p.m.

Presenter: Rabbi Mark Shapiro, Sinai Temple,
Respondents: Rabbi Marc Rudolph and Rabbi Robert Sternberg

"The Jewish People in America, Who Will Fill Our Pews?"

Tuesday, May 17 at 7:30 p.m.

Presenter: Dr. Sylvia Barak Fishman, Brandies University
Respondents: Rabbi Jerry Gurland and Rabbi Yakov Wolff

All sessions will be held at Springfield JCC

How I Chose to Become a Jew

By Joel Bertuzzi

(Joel Bertuzzi recently converted to Judaism. He wrote the following statement as a preparation for his conversion.)

It's hard to believe that this day has arrived. When Betsy and I were married almost 24 years ago, I would have to say one of the last things on my mind was my conversion to Judaism. In fact, it wasn't on my mind at all! Having grown up in a largely agnostic family, religion of any type really didn't play a role in my life. Before our children, Matt, Jared and Jillian, arrived we practiced some of the Christian holidays and some of the Jewish holidays, but in a very secular non-committed way for me. When Matt arrived on the scene, Betsy and I had that much postponed and delayed conversation that you're supposed to have before you get married... **how to bring up the kids.** I had to admit that it didn't matter much to me so I agreed that we would have a Jewish household and I would leave my secular holiday celebrations in a box with the baseball cards and other artifacts of my youth.

Life really didn't change much for me until Matt started to become involved in the Temple youth groups and I lost my sister Jennifer to cancer. Seeing Matt's involvement in the Temple was very inspiring. When Matt became a Bar Mitzvah in 1998, I was truly amazed at his accomplishments in learning his Torah portion and the meaning of the ceremony. I was very proud of him. I'd say that the seed was planted that day. But, the field lay fallow until my sister Jennifer's death in October of 2000. That was the tipping point for me. I'm sure that's no surprise to anyone sharing my favorite hair color (watch yourself, that's silver not grey!). I said tipping point, instead of turning point, because I wasn't turning at all but rather tipped off balance and falling. Mortality's a pretty strong force when it smacks you along side the head! Jennifer's death made me wonder who else had traveled my road...and if I would see them...I had a feeling of being lost in life not knowing which way to go and feeling that there must be something else to it.

I had a few meetings with the Rabbi, with many more stops and starts and soul-searching before finally dipping my toe into the pool and starting to attend Torah study. I attended as regularly as I could given a schedule of basketball, soccer and swim meets and all other things that parents find tugging at them. I found Torah study to be completely different than I expected and much more interesting than I ever would have imagined.

Several portions of the Torah really resonated with me, one being the dream of Jacob in Genesis 28. Jacob is fleeing his family and life to start anew after stealing his brother Esau's birthright. He is completely uncertain of what the future holds for him. He is alone, with nothing to his name. As night falls, he takes some stones and sleeps out in the wilderness exposed to the cold and

dangerous animals of prey. He is the epitome of helplessness and vulnerability; seemingly more forsaken than blessed.

In Jacob's dream he saw a ladder reaching up to the sky from the ground, and angels were traveling up and down on it. God spoke to Jacob to tell him that he would give him the land upon which he was sleeping and that his descendants would be as the dust of the earth and spread to the north, south, east and west. God told him to remember that he would protect him and bring him back to this land after Jacob's journeys. Jacob awoke from his sleep and said "Surely the Lord is present in this place, and I did not know it!"

When we read this passage in Torah study I was immediately shocked. Jacob wasn't expecting an encounter with God that night and I certainly wasn't expecting any miraculous revelations that particular Saturday morning either. But this simple passage of twelve verses started to change my life. I did realize that I was in fact ...lost. But, I also realized that you could continue your journey wherever it takes you and just as Jacob's exile was temporary, it is possible to have faith that you will return "home."

More recently, in one of my regular meetings with the Rabbi, we were discussing who wrote the Bible and how it has changed over the centuries and how it differs from the Christian Old Testament. We were discussing the prophets and he wanted to show me the book that Christians use to end the Bible. This is the book of the prophet Malachi foretelling the coming day of judgment and reckoning...all in all pretty scary stuff!

By contrast, our Hebrew Bible, the Tanakh, ends with the Book of Chronicles. The last portion of Chronicles details the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans at the direction of God and the subsequent exile of the Hebrews to Babylon. God promised the prophet Jeremiah that the exile would last 70 years, until the rise of the Persian Kingdom. The last paragraph goes like this...

And in the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, when the word of the Lord spoken to Jeremiah was fulfilled, the Lord roused the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia to issue a proclamation throughout his realm by word of mouth and writing as follows: "Thus said King Cyrus of Persia: The Lord God of Heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and has charged me with building Him a House in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Any one of you of all His people, the Lord his God be with him and let him go up."

For me at last I know the direction I'm taking. Like Jacob and the Jewish people exiled in Babylon... I'm heading home.