

SIM SHALOM

OUR NEWSLETTER

Sivan-Tamuz 5770

May-June 2010

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL

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Mazel tov!

Please join Eryn Jones as she
celebrates her confirmation
7:30 p.m. Friday, May 21.

From the President

I am greatly honored and a bit nervous to take over this position. I am very thankful to Fernando Russek for all the work he did to make the temple such a warm and beautiful place. And I'm relying on the good will of the congregants and the spiritual support of Rabbi Joseph.

I hope that we can solidify the temple's accomplishments, by keeping our finances up to date and paying off our loan soon. We need to keep the temple a warm, welcoming and friendly place where congregants gather because they are spiritually fulfilled, socially nurtured, and just have a good time. All this takes a concerted effort on all our parts. We come from widely varied backgrounds and must try to accommodate each others' differing Jewish needs.

We also cannot stop trying to move forward. Perhaps the temple will start an endowment fund for special projects, scholarships, emergen-

cies, etc. And when it's time for repairs in the future, we can be ready. It would be nice to offer Hebrew classes to teenagers and adults. I would also like to see an event or two each year getting together with the other valley synagogues. It's especially nice for the children to meet other Jewish children in the area.

We have already started several new programs this past year, based on suggestions from the congregation. Please don't hesitate to communicate your ideas and feeling about the temple to me or any board member. Sometimes members don't want to bother to complain or suggest, but some problems can be fixed, and some new ideas can be implemented.

There are only 45 member households at our temple, and that's on a good day, so we really need for everyone to be engaged and participating. I'll need everybody's help.

Thank you,
Laurel Steinberg

CALENDAR

FRI., MAY 21

Shabbat Service, 7:30 PM
Confirmation Shabbat

SAT., MAY 22

Shabbat Service, 9 AM
Havdallah/Basic
Judaism Class, 6:30 PM

SUN., MAY 23

Last day of Religion
School, 10 AM

FRI., JUNE 4

Shabbat Service, 7:30 PM

FRI., JUNE 25

Shabbat Service, 7:30 PM

SAT., JUNE 26

Shabbat Service, 9 AM
Havdallah Movie Night,
6:30 PM

FRI., JULY 2

Shabbat Service, 7:30 PM

TUES., JULY 20

Tisha B'Av

FRI., JULY 23

Shabbat Service, 7:30 PM

SAT., JULY 24

Shabbat Service, 9 AM
Havdallah/Basic
Judaism Class, 6:30 PM

NEWS AND NOTES

■ **MAZEL TOV** to Eden Levine on her graduation from Port Isabel High School. She plans to attend the University of Texas at Austin in the fall.

■ **BON VOYAGE** to Janet Wilder and Dyan Banks on their upcoming trip to Israel. Gail Green and Lois Day are traveling with them. Have a great time, and take pictures for us to see!

■ **MAZEL TOV** to members of the Harlingen Jewish Community who were recently inducted into the Harlingen Walk of Fame at the Harlingen Municipal Auditorium, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the founding of Harlingen. They are Lewis Levine, Charley Feldman, Rollie Koppel, Ben Levine (of blessed memory), Sam Alexander (of blessed memory), and Mal Kasanoff (of blessed memory).

LOOKING AHEAD: SAVE THE DATE

Experience a summer night in the Catskills, here in Harlingen, when poet Eugene Novogrodsky will recite poems based on Jewish themes and share tales of the Yiddish speaking culture of the Catskills where he grew up in the mid-1900s. Saturday, June 26, 6 p.m., after Havdalah services.

■ **The Temple Calendar** for 2010-2011 will be set up soon. If you are planning a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, wedding, anniversary party, etc. to be held at the temple, now is the time to fix the date and coordinate it with Rabbi Joseph's weekends at the temple. Please contact Laurel Steinberg or Rabbi Joseph.

DUES NOTICE

If you still owe temple dues for this year (2009-2010), you will be receiving a reminder and statement any day now. We all need to pay our dues so that we won't need an emergency campaign as we did last year.

■ **MAZEL TOV** to Eryn Jones and the Jones family on Eryn's Confirmation.

ONEGS

SPONSORS**MAY**

Judy and Steve Jones*
Moniel Powell

JUNE

Dyan Banks*
Shirley and Jerry Sondock
Lillian Cohen

JULY

Jan Cassidy and Joel Smith*
Sofia Shirazi
Dena and Lewis Levine

**Checklist:**

- Decaf coffee
- Cream & sugar
- Decaf cold drinks or juice and ice
- Cups for coffee and drinks
- Plastic ware, napkins, plates
- Kosher wine
- Small wine cups



- Unsliced challah
- Table cloth (if one is used from the Temple, please launder it and return it to the Temple as soon as possible)
- Table decoration
- Desserts for about 40-50 people (choices of cookies, cakes, nuts, fruit, coffee cakes, or flan)

**Oneg coordinator is responsible for organizing the group and its duties (who brings and does what, when and where).*

DONATIONS TO THE TEMPLE

MAY:

From the Greenfeld family, to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

From the Alpert family

From Emily Alpert, in honor of new Temple President Laurel Steinberg

From Fernando and Alma Russek, in honor of new Temple President Laurel Steinberg

From Fernando and Alma Russek, in honor of Eryn Jones' confirmation

APRIL:

From Robert Alvarado, with thanks to Rabbi Joseph for lessons

From Bert and Jamie Wolf, 300 thank-you cards to send to the temple's donors

From Amy Koppel, in gratitude to Fernando Russek Jr. for placing mezuzahs in her home

From John and Eileen Brown, in honor of Amy Koppel being named Woman of the Year

From Fernando and Alma Russek, for the building fund, in honor of Amy Koppel being named Woman of the Year

SHAVUOT: Wednesday-Thursday, May 19-20

Shavuot, the Festival of Weeks, is the second of the three major festivals with both historical and agricultural significance (the other two are Passover and Sukkot). It commemorates the time when the first fruits were harvested and brought to the Temple, and is known as Hag ha-Bikkurim (the Festival of the First Fruits). Historically, it celebrates the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, and is also known as Hag Matan Torateinu (the Festival of the Giving of Our Torah).

The period from Passover to Shavuot is a time of great anticipation. We count each of the days from the second day of Passover to the day before Shavuot, 49 days or 7 full weeks, hence the name of the festival. Shavuot is also sometimes known as Pentecost, because it falls on the 50th day. The counting reminds us of the important connection between Passover and Shavuot: Passover freed us physically from bondage, but the giving of the Torah on Shavuot redeemed us spiritually from our bondage to idolatry and immorality.

It is noteworthy that the holiday is called the time of the giving of the Torah, rather than the time of receiving the Torah. The sages point out that we are constantly in the process of receiving the Torah, that we receive it every day, but it was first given at this time. Thus it is the giving, not the receiving, that makes the holiday significant.

It is customary to stay up the entire first night of Shavuot and study Torah, then pray as early as possible in the morning. It is also customary to eat a dairy meal at least once during Shavuot. There are varying opinions as to why this is done. Some say it is a reminder of the promise regarding the land of Israel, a land flowing with "milk and honey." According to another view, it is because our ancestors had just received the Torah (and the dietary laws therein), and did not have both meat and dairy dishes available.

The book of Ruth is read at this time. Varying reasons are given for this custom, though none seems to be definitive.

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