

# Sim Shalom

Cheshvan-Kislev 5773  
November 2012

THE NEWSLETTER OF TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL, HARLINGEN TEXAS

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## FROM THE RABBI

Shalom,

We prepare now to celebrate the great American festival of Thanksgiving, the time when we read the Torah portion of *Vayaitzay*, which contains the first mention of thanksgiving. Leah, the wife of Jacob, was the first to thank G-D for the blessing of children. She called her fourth son, Yehudah (Thank G-D), because she was grateful to the Almighty G-D for His wonderful gift.

As descendants of Yehudah we are called Yehudim or Jews, and thanking G-D is one of the most frequent expressions of our people. Every prayer either begins or concludes with a blessing. You ask a traditional Jew: "How are you?" "How are things?" Invariably, the answer is "Thank G-D." It is more than a habitual phrase. It reflects an abiding faith in a benevolent G-D and expresses the unwavering optimism and gratitude of the Jew. A dismal past or a discouraging present always gives way to a hopeful future.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

## FROM THE GABBAI

What a year — 2012 is running out soon. Before we knew it, it was November. The Mayans were wrong — soon it will be 2013.

I want to take a moment one more time to thank all our friends and community for all you do for us and for the Temple, and by "Temple," I mean the people who form our extended Temple Beth Israel Jewish family. Our building is nice, but buildings are empty pieces of concrete and wood without sounds of life and joy.

This year, we will be celebrating the 10-year anniversary of our Sunday School, and we will have an extra large Hanukkah party to celebrate both events. We will have more information in December's newsletter.

We want to wish a prompt recovery to Robert Weiss from his recent surgery, to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thank you again for the many donations that you sent to the temple during the holiday season this past fall. The yizkor donations, holiday donations, tsedakah box donations all helped our temple to start the year on a good financial basis. As I have said in the past, we live from hand to mouth to meet our basic needs to keep services and the school running smoothly. We need everybody's help during the year - through dues, donations, tuition, and participation in our fundraising activities.

November 16 to 18 will be Rabbi Joseph's next Shabbat and weekend visit. On that Saturday evening, November 17, we will have a special presentation by our member David Jacobson on the "71/2 Habits of Highly Humorous People," based on his book of the same name. You will learn how to improve your sense of humor and how humor can improve your health. David, who is the Chief of Social Work at the VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System, developed humor techniques to help himself through years of chronic pain. This will

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## CALENDAR

### NOVEMBER

- 11 Religion school, 10 a.m.  
 16-18 *Rabbi in town*  
 16 Shabbat service, 7:30 p.m.  
 17 Shabbat service 9 a.m.,  
 followed by breakfast and  
 Torah discussion  
 17 Havdalah and presentation by  
 David Jacobson on "The 71/2  
 Habits of Highly Humorous  
 People," 6:30 pm.  
 18 Religion school, 10 a.m.

### DECEMBER

- 2 Religion school, 10 a.m.  
 7 Shabbat service, 7:30 p.m.  
 8 Erev Chanukah, first candle  
 9 Religion school, 10 a.m.  
 9-16 *Chanukah*  
 14-16 *Rabbi in town*  
 14 Chanukiah Shabbat, 7:30 p.m.  
 15 Shabbat service 9 a.m.  
 15 Havdalah and lecture on  
 Judaism, 6:30 pm  
 16 10th Anniversary  
 Celebration of the Religion  
 School, 10 a.m.  
 24-25 Student lock-in for children  
 ages 8 to 14. \$5 contribution  
 requested. Games, movies,  
 snacks, food, stories, art  
 projects, (sleep?)

### JANUARY

- 4 Shabbat service, 7:30 p.m.  
 6 Religion school, 10 a.m.  
 13 Religion school, 10 a.m.  
 18-20 *Rabbi in town*  
 18 Shabbat service, 6:30 p.m.  
 Potluck Shabbat Dinner  
 19 Shabbat service 9 a.m.  
 20 Religion school, 10 a.m.  
 26 *Tu B'Shvat*  
 27 Religion school, 10 a.m.;  
 Tu B'Shevat outing

### FEBRUARY

- 1 Shabbat service, 7:30 p.m.  
 3 Religion school, 10 a.m.  
 10 Religion school, 10 a.m.  
 22-24 *Rabbi in town*

## EVENTS

- **Special program on Humor**, by David Jacobson, our member, on Saturday, Nov 17, at 6:30 pm, together with Havdalah services. Based on his book The 7 ½ Habits of Highly Humorous People, this talk will help us to develop our sense of humor and teach us how humor can improve our health. David is an expert on humor, for use in counseling and in our personal lives. He has learned to use humor to combat chronic pain, and he speaks on this topic around the country. This should be fun and interesting for the whole family.
- **Celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the Religion School and Chanukah Party**, Sunday, Dec 16, starting at 10 am with services, presentations and music, Chanukah games and contests, lunch for the school and the whole congregation.
- **Book talk on the History of Jews in Texas**: A talk by Dr Bryan Edward Stone, author of The Chosen Folks: Jews on the Frontiers of Texas sponsored by the Brownsville Chapter of Hadassah, at Temple Beth El in Brownsville, on Sunday, Nov 11 at 1 pm. Dr Stone is an Associate Professor of History at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi. Please call Emily Alpert at email emilyalpert@aol.com or 455-2442 if you plan to attend, as pizza and salad is being served for lunch.

## NEWS

- **Greetings**: Welcome to our new members Oscar and Nora Garcia of Brownsville!
- **Get well wishes** to Robert Weiss who is recovering from surgery.
- **Congratulations to the Weisberg-Stewart family!** Brittany Stewart was inducted into two honor organizations at the University of Texas-Pan American for academic recognition: National Society of Collegiate Scholars for top 20 percent of freshman and sophomores; and Golden Key, bestowed on those in the top 15percent of their class. Jackie Stewart qualified and received her graduation ring at Texas A&M University-College Station. AND Susy Weisberg celebrates her 70th birthday! Mazel tov!
- **Please send the temple your family's dates for birthdays, anniversaries, and yahrtzeits.** In addition to listing upcoming dates in the Sim Shalom, we plan to send reminder letters for approaching yahrtzeit dates so that you can say kadish at services at the appropriate time and have an opportunity to give tsedakah in memory of your departed loved ones. Send your information to Fernando Russek by phone at 970-4005 or by email to uniquefarjr@aol.com.
- **New Rates for Memorial Plaques**: Our rates for memorial plaques on our memorial board have been raised from \$250 to \$350. Or you can buy two for \$600. Please contact Fernando Russek, Bert Wolf, or any board member to purchase a memorial plaque.
- **Temple Judaica Store**: We have new items at the store, such as some pretty new jewelry, klafs for mezuzot, a challah cover, Shabbat candles, and more coming. Take a look in the temple social hall.

### PRESIDENT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

be a fun and informative event for the whole family.

It is not too long until Chanukah, our next big celebration. In addition to our Friday night Chanukiah service (Dec 14), we will have our annual Chanukah party and pot-luck lunch for the school and community on Sunday De-

cember 16. It will be extra special this year as we will be celebrating the 10th anniversary of our Religion School.

Please participate with the temple community at our services and special events.

*B'Shalom,  
 Laurel Steinberg, President*

## RABBI, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

We are taught at a very young age to be grateful. The first prayer we learn as children to recite every morning is *Modeh Ani* (I Thank G-D). I am grateful to G-D for the gift of life — the feeling nurtured in the child's heart from the moment he or she learns to speak.

One thanks G-D for life, because life offers so many wonderful possibilities. It gives one the opportunity to live, to develop, to change, to improve, to create. Above all, life offers the opportunity to perfect the world and to establish G-D'S Kingdom on earth. Imbued with a sense of idealism, the Jew, born as Yehudah, observed Thanksgiving daily. When things looked bright, he Thanked G-D for the light that was good. When darkness entered his world, he accepted the challenge and thanked G-D for the opportunity to light a candle.

For the Jewish people, Thanksgiving is much, much more than an annual festival. It is a way of life.

As we are about to observe and celebrate Thanksgiving, I am extremely appreciative and thankful for the manifold Blessings G-D has given me. I am extremely grateful for my wife Laurie,

who makes my life happier and richer with each passing day.

I am extremely grateful for my wonderful, loving daughter Samantha, my wonderful, loving son-in-law Adam and our beloved grandson Benjamin. I look extremely forward to teaching Benjamin the *Modeh Ani* prayer soon.

I am extremely grateful for all my family, my health, and for the wonderful privilege of being able to serve as the rabbi of Congregation Temple Beth Israel. No rabbi could ask for more.

May we all enjoy a wonderful Thanksgiving!

*Shalom U'V'Racha!  
Rabbi Frank Joseph*



## Celebrations

### BIRTHDAYS

10/23 Olga Quintero  
11/6 Susie Weisberg  
11/8 Laurie Anne Jacobson  
11/11 Luis Gonzalez  
11/12 Jackie Stewart  
11/13 Benjamin M. Yudesis  
11/14 Monica Stewart  
11/18 Elizabeth Holzman  
11/20 Charlene Moskal  
11/20 Deborah Russek  
11/27 Alan Heinz  
11/27 Renata Sobelman  
11/29 Ari Holzman  
12/4 Ivan Shirazi  
12/7 Liliana Cohen  
12/7 Fran Wolpin

12/10 Lori Suissa  
12/17 David Goldstein  
12/20 Jose Cohen  
12/21 Jacquelyn Goldstein  
12/21 David Martin Jacobson  
12/22 Serena Levine  
12/22 Larry Wolpin

### ANNIVERSARIES

10/1 Dan & Renata Simha Sobelman  
11/7 Gerald & Shirley Sondock  
11/19 Ron & Serena Levine  
11/20 David & Elizabeth Goldstein  
11/25 John & Eileen Brown  
12/15 Jack & Amy Salander  
12/16 Fernando & Alma Russek  
*Did we miss you?*  
*Please send birthdays & anniversaries  
to labjoseph1832@gmail.com.*

## Read up

### Israel tourism: Building On A Record Year

Despite dire warnings of imminent conflict between Israel and Iran throughout the year, foreign tourists flocked to the Holy Land in record numbers.

According to Israel's Ministry of Tourism, the Jewish calendar year 5772 was the "best tourism year ever," with over 3.5 million visitors spending at least one day in Israel.

<http://www.thejewishweek.com/special-sections/jewish-travel-guide/building-record-year>

### Anti-Semitic Incidents In U.S. Decrease, ADL Says

The number of anti-Semitic incidents declined by 13 percent in 2011, an annual audit found.

<http://www.thejewishweek.com/news/breaking-news/anti-semitic-incidents-us-decrease-adl-says>

### "Bad Jews" off Broadway

Set on Manhattan's Upper West Side within bagel-throwing distance of the lox counter at Zabar's, "Bad Jews" delivers handily on its title: Between Daphna and her antagonistic first cousin, Liam, it's a toss-up who's worse and worsen in Joshua Harmon's lively little comedy of hostility and intrafamily kvetching now on the small stage at the Roundabout Underground through Dec. 30.

[http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,20364394\\_20645186,00.html](http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,20364394_20645186,00.html)

### A Find Unlocks Comics Mystery

A drawing by an American artist, discovered in a Jerusalem junk shop, reveals the lost grandeur of German Jewry.

<http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-arts-and-culture/116021/a-find-unlocks-comic-mystery>

GABBAI,  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Alma's father and all of our loved ones who are at this time fighting an illness.

### Understanding G-d's tests

Our life is a sum of events, and as we walk towards something, we walk away from something else. Our surroundings change even when we don't move and even more while things are in motion. We likely will end in a very different point than the one we were heading for. Success and happiness are in the hearts of the beholders, and any physical print that we leave behind us is eventually erased by the sands of time. But our acts can last for millennia. We know this to be true when we look at a man named Abram, who we read about in the Torah. Abram wondered about his own creation and found G-d, was obedient and faithful, lived a life of hard work and, knowing he was responsible for people other than himself, acted accordingly. His life was also full of events, circumstances and situations that we understand were tests, as we read on Bereishis 22:1. But I ask myself how can G-d test Abraham or any of us when he knows the outcome at the time of inception? The only logical purpose is that the test itself is for us. We are testing ourselves for our own benefit. I think Abraham knew this and found blessing in everything because he knew G-d knew better. G-d said of him, "For I have loved him, because he commands his children and his household after him that they keep the way of Hashem, doing charity and justice." (Bereshis 18:19).

Then our print in this world is left when we teach and lead our children and household to do Tzedaka and Justice (what's right and just). If we understand this, we must live what we teach. It will be easy to recognize our creator, and we will be G-d-fearing people like Abraham Avinu. We will know that fear of G-d is a fear of not loving Him with all our hearts, the fear of not letting G-d in our lives, of not trust-

# Thank you

### DONATIONS

TO THE GABBAI FUND

- Victor and Judy DeLeon
- Mary H. Warshowsky
- Bert & Jamie Wolf

TO THE GENERAL FUND

- Tomas Sanchez Jr., for Tzedakah
- Tomas Sanchez Jr., for Tzedakah

TO THE RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

- Mary H. Warshowsky
- Richard and Christine Newman, in honor of Rabbi and Laurie Joseph's Grandson Benjamin

ing Him. Like G-d said to Abram, "Fear not, I am a shield for you; your reward is very great" (Bereishis 15:1) ... and it is written that "he trusted in Hashem, and reckoned it to him as righteousness (Bereishis 15:6). He had faith in G-d and knew He knew better, that G-d would do what was right.)

Most of us have not lived through situations and tests as difficult as those faced by Abraham, though the difficulty of a test is in the heart of the beholder. Abraham never faltered. At every turn he tried to help others and do what was necessary, including trying to convince G-d not to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, or going to war to release his nephew Lot who had been kidnapped. G-d did His part, and here we are today teaching and leading our children — the descendants of Abraham — and our household in Tzedaka and Justice and learning about his life.

May we find good and blessings in our ways, may our tests become opportunities, and may we be G-d-fearing people soon, fearing not to trust Him. And when our time comes, may we be like Abraham — as the Torah says, he "expired and died at a good old age, mature and content." Then our teachings and actions will last for millennia.

*Fernando A. Russek*

### SPECIAL THANKS

To Abby Warshowsky for the lovely new spice rack in our kitchen.

To Bert and Jamie Wolf for a generous donation to a "Rainy Day Fund" for the temple's future

## Recipe

### Southwestern Turkey Soup

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups cooked turkey
  - 4 cups vegetable broth
  - 28 ounce can whole tomatoes
  - 4 ounce can chopped chiles
  - 2 roma tomatoes, chopped
  - 1 onion, chopped
  - 2 cloves garlic, crushed
  - 1 tablespoon lime juice
  - 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
  - 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
  - salt and pepper to taste
- 
- 1 avocado, diced
  - 1/2 teaspoon dried cilantro

Directions:

1. In a large pot over medium heat, combine top 11 ingredients. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat, and simmer 15 to 20 minutes.
2. Stir in avocado and cilantro, and simmer 15 to 20 minutes, until slightly thickened. Spoon into serving bowls.



# Oneg Shabbat

Oneg Shabbat means “Joy of Sabbath.” It is meant to be a gathering to express outwardly the happiness inherent in celebrating the Sabbath. This is in keeping with the biblical injunction “and call the Sabbath a delight” (Isaiah 58:13). Usually refreshments are provided to complement the congenial atmosphere and perpetuate in spirit the Talmud’s recommendation to eat three full meals a day. Traditionally at Temple Beth Israel, this Mitzvah is satisfied by set up, clean up, tablecloth care, wine/juice, challah and some light refreshments. Unless we are having a pot luck Shabbat dinner, a meal is not expected. It is not meant to be a burden, but rather a Mitzvah to help celebrate the Sabbath. For those who wish to “delight” your fellow congregants with your culinary skills and enjoy hosting, please feel free to express your joy.

If, after reviewing the calendar, you find a conflict with the date you are scheduled to host, please contact either Alma Russek (956)970-7722 almafrussek3@aol.com or Abby Warshowsky (956)536-0705 gonsky@sbcglobal.net. If you are unable to participate at all for whatever reason, we ask that you please make a donation to support your Oneg co-hosts. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact either Alma or Abby.

## November 16

Newman  
Mink  
Mary Warshowsky

## December 14

Hannukah  
De Leon  
Holzman  
Suissa  
Liliana Cohen

## January 18 2013

Pot Luck Shabbat Dinner  
Steinberg/Berg

## February 22

Purim  
Quinteros  
Jacobson  
Stewart and Weisberg

## March 22

Before Passover  
Smith  
Keyes  
Koppel

## April 19

Goldstein  
Abby Warshowsky  
Powell

# Jews in the News

## The Chosen: Jews in the 113th Congress

NEW YORK (JTA) -- The next Congress will have 10 Jews in the Senate and 22 in the House of Representatives, a decline from the 112th Congress. Below is the list of Jews who are expected to serve in the 113th Congress.

### SENATE:

Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.)  
Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.)\*\*  
Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.)  
Ben Cardin (D-Md.)\*\*  
Carl Levin (D-Mich.)  
Al Franken (D-Minn.)  
Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.)  
Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.)  
Ron Wyden (D-Ore.)  
Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.)\*\*  
(Note: Sen. Michael Bennet, D-Colo., who is projected to win his re-election bid, does not identify a religion, but notes that his mother is Jewish and a Holocaust survivor.)

### HOUSE OF

### REPRESENTATIVES:

Susan Davis (D-Calif.)

Alan Lowenthal (D-Calif.)\*  
Adam Schiff (D-Calif.)  
Brad Sherman (D-Calif.)  
Henry Waxman (D-Calif.)  
Jared Polis (D-Colo.)  
Ted Deutch (D-Fla.)  
Lois Frankel (D-Fla.)\*  
Alan Grayson (D-Fla.)\*  
Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.)  
Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.)  
Brad Schneider (D-Ill.)\*  
John Yarmuth (D-Ky.)  
Sander Levin (D-Mich.)  
Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.)  
Steve Israel (D-N.Y.)  
Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.)  
Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.)  
Allyson Schwartz (D-Pa.)  
David Cicilline (D-R.I.)  
Steve Cohen (D-Tenn.)  
Eric Cantor (R-Va.)

\* Newly elected to House in Tuesday’s elections. (Note: Alan Grayson had served in the House but lost his seat in the 2010 midterm elections.)

\*\* Senators re-elected Tuesday.

## Jewish Museum of Tolerance inaugurated in Russia

MOSCOW – Israeli President Shimon Peres, who is on an official visit to Russia, inaugurated the Jewish Museum of Tolerance on Thursday in the presence of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

The cost of the museum is estimated at \$60 million, and its sponsors include the World Zionist Congress and American businessman Ronald Lauder.

The idea to establish a museum of tolerance in Russia was supported by President Vladimir Putin, who even suggested donating his monthly salary for the project. The museum includes an interactive center with a variety of changing exhibitions, a scientific center, a children’s center, and a modern arts center.

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4302834,00.html>

## Jewish groups collecting funds for Sandy storm relief:

By JTA Staff

Jewish United Fund (Chicago); UJA-Federation of New York Hurricane Sandy Relief Fund; Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) Hurricane Relief Fund; Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) Hurricane Relief Fund; United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ) Disaster Relief Fund; Chabad Hurricane Sandy Relief Fund; Orthodox Union (OU) Hurricane Relief Fund; B’nai B’rith Disaster Relief Fund

# Temple Beth Israel 2012-2013 Calendar

## AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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## SEPTEMBER

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## OCTOBER

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## NOVEMBER

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## DECEMBER

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## JANUARY 2013

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## FEBRUARY

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## MARCH

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## APRIL

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## MAY

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## JUNE

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## JULY

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## AUGUST

Aug 24-25 National/school holidays  
Aug 26 Jewish holiday/festival

## SEPTEMBER

Sept 1 Religion School in session  
Sept 16 Rabbi Joseph in attendance  
Sept 17,18 Additional 7:30 p.m. service  
Sept 25 Shabbat services  
Sept 26 7:30 p.m. Fri./9 a.m. Sat.  
Sept 30 Daily morning services, Monday-Friday, 7:20 a.m.

## OCTOBER

Oct. 1-7 School day schedule  
Oct. 8 10:45-12:15 classtime  
Oct. 8 12:15-1:00 lunch  
Oct. 8 1:00-1:45 Hebrew class

## DECEMBER

Dec. 8 Erev Chanukah, first candle  
Dec. 9-16 Chanukah  
Dec. 14 Shabbat Chanukah Service  
Dec. 24 Student lock-in

## JANUARY

Jan. 18 Early services/Potluck Shabbat Dinner  
Jan. 26 Tu B'Shvat  
Jan. 27 Tu B'Shevat outing

## FEBRUARY

Feb. 24 Purim Party, Megillah reading

## MARCH

Mar. 3 Temple Work Day  
Mar. 10 Religion School Model seder  
Mar. 25 Temple Community Seder, Erev Passover

## APRIL

Mar. 26-Apr. 2 Passover  
Apr. 7 Yom HaShoah  
Apr. 15 Yom HaZikaron  
Apr. 16 Yom HaAtzma'ut, Israel Independence Day  
Apr. 28 Lag B'Omer

## MAY

May 14 Erev Shavuot, Services  
May 15-16 Shavuot  
May 26 Last day religion school

## JUNE

June 14-15 Huff B'nei Mitzvah

## JULY

July 16 Tisha B'Av



Bryan Edward Stone's first book, *The Chosen Folks: Jews on the Frontiers of Texas*, was published in 2010 by the University of Texas Press. He is an Associate Professor of History at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi and a Visiting Professor at the Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, where he teaches a summer course on Texas Jews. He has published extensively on the subject of Texas-Jewish History and is currently editing the memoir of Alexander Gurwitz and preparing it for publication.

The Brownsville Chapter of Hadassah  
Invites you to Meet the Author!!!

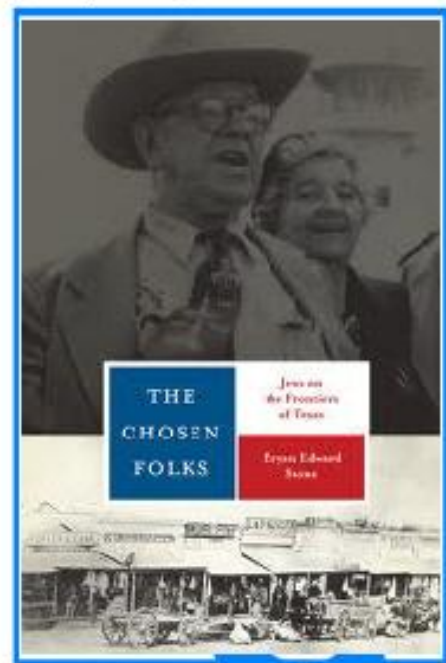
Temple Beth El  
24 Coveaway  
Brownsville, Texas

1:00 PM

Sunday, November 11th

R.S.V.P. to Emily Alpert 956.455.2442 or  
email [emilyalpert@aol.com](mailto:emilyalpert@aol.com)

**It is VERY IMPORTANT that you confirm your attendance being that we will be serving a pizza and salad lunch!**



Books  
available for  
sale!