

HaShomer

FEBRUARY 2009

Congregation Beth Shalom

SHEVAT/ADAR 5769

Schedule of Services

February 2009

Shevat/Adar 5769

Friday, February 6, 8:00 pm

Saturday, February 7

Torah Study 9:00 am

Shabbat Service 10:00 am

Torah: Beshalach

Amanda Wallace Bat Mitzvah

Friday, February 13, 8:00 pm

Saturday, February 14

Torah Study 9:00 am

Shabbat Service 10:00 am

Torah: Yitro

Friday, February 20

Tot Shabbat 6:00 pm

Shabbat Service 7:30 pm

Saturday, February 21

Torah Study 9:00 am

Shabbat Service 10:00 am

Torah: Mishpatim

Wednesday, February 25, 7:00 am

Rosh Chodesh Adar

Friday, February 27, 8:00 pm

Sisterhood/Brotherhood Service

Saturday, February 28

Torah Study 9:00 am

Shabbat Service 10:00 am

Torah: Terumah

**Join us Friday Evening,
February 27 at 8:00 p.m.
for the Congregant-Led
Sisterhood/Brotherhood
Shabbat Service**

Save the Date:

**Second Annual
Golf Tournament
Monday, April 20**



From the Rabbi

I write this on Sunday, January 11, from New York, where I am attending a conference.

But today I had the opportunity to attend an amazing event. Jewish communities all over the U.S. held solidarity rallies for Israel and today's rally was held in front of the Israeli Consulate on East 42nd Street, just two blocks from the United Nations.

Over 10,000 people lined the north side of 42nd Street, stretching from Second Avenue to Third Avenue, and all the way to Grand Central Station at 42nd and Park Avenue. We all wore red hats to symbolize the Code Red alerts issued when early warning systems detect a missile about to strike a community in the south of Israel.

In our smaller communities, we know the broad support for Israel exists. Despite the nay sayers, the U.S. remains deeply committed to the existence and security of Israel. But the wide nature of that support was shown today in New York. Senator Charles Schumer led the parade of dignitaries, followed by Governor David Patterson.

Jewish and non-Jewish, Republican and Democrat people pledged their support. We heard from leaders in the Italian, Chinese, Evangelical, and Latino communities. Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform rabbis and rabbinical students led readings.

One message comes through loud and clear. And it is our obligation as well to deliver that message. We are a people who want peace. But we are a people who never again will be victimized by terror. We are a people who shoulder much of the world's responsibility to fight terror. And we are a people who strive to protect the lives of innocent civilians, but who cannot allow the lives of our soldiers and fellow Jews to remain in jeopardy.

As we confront these difficult times, keep the perspective and do not lose hope. Tell your friends and neighbors. Do not allow an idle or uneducated comment to go unanswered. Come to shul and pray for the peace of Israel.

And let us fervently pray for the coming of Shalom.

– Rabbi Ned J. Soltz

Eye on Middle-Eastern Affairs

Reflections on Israel and the Attack on Hamas

Regarding the fighting between Israel and Hamas that began on December 27 (and is continuing as of this writing, though a ceasefire looks likely), there are so many things to discuss that it's hard to know where to begin.

I suppose one place might be with the necessity of the attack. Some have accused Israel of acting out of electoral considerations: that because before the fighting polls indicated Likud would win the upcoming February elections,

Kadima and Labor decided to launch the assault in hopes of showing Israelis how tough they were and thus garner enough votes to defeat Likud.

This is sheer nonsense. Israel is a democracy like any other democracy, and of course its leaders usually consider the impact of decisions on public opinion. No elected politician does otherwise. But it's clear that there have been a number of other conditions that facili-

Continued on page 8 . . .



From the President

I took some time off from work over the winter break for some much-needed down time. Much of this time was spent assessing the first year of the Snow administration. What was accomplished, what remains to be accomplished, as well as objectives I wish to achieve during the second and final year of my term.

While our accomplishments have been outlined and elucidated in previous writings and congregational meetings, I wanted to articulate the main objective I wish to focus on for this year. While this will be a prime objective, it in no way will diminish the strategies and implementation of those strategies laid out previously that the board is ardently working on.



There are three components that make a synagogue a viable and valuable asset to the community it serves: a House of worship, (*Bet Tefilah*), a House of Study (*Bet Midrash*), and a House of Cultural/Social Gathering (*Bet Knesset*). The House of Study and Gathering are auxiliary functions that revolve around the prime objective – a house of worship.

While education is alive and well at Beth Shalom, and our programs are generally well-attended (case in point is the recent Brotherhood Breakfast Speaker Series January 11), our strength as a house of worship has diminished. There are several reasons for this and I am not going to play the blame game. Suffice it to say that many members who used to attend are either deceased or infirmed. Many others just stopped coming. We struggle most Friday nights just to make a minyan. Torah study, which used to boast a fluid group of 20-30 congregants, now usually draws 6-8.

As I have said before, our attitude is the prophet of our future. Let me explain to you why I am cautiously optimistic that our service participation will once again shine with the light of many souls in attendance.

Our Chanukah service on December 26, attracted over 40 congregants. There were two tables in the social hall for the placing the Chanukiah that each family member brought. The candles were inserted and the appropriate blessings chanted.

Because of the intimacy of the moment, we all sat gathered around the tables and greeted the Sabbath bride with the glow from the candles reflected on our faces and in our hearts. It was a very spiritual and moving moment. Who among us doesn't long to capture that spiritual intimacy and elevation with our fellow congregants?

We have also been fortunate to make/exceed a minyan on Friday night for five weeks running.

I have also begun a personal appeal to congregants to consider attending Torah Study. I am pleased to report that

Continued on page 8 . . .

HaShomer

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Vol. XXV, Issue 5, February, 2009

Editor: Hy Siegel Editorial Assistance: Janet Aaronson

Views from Kabbalah:

What is Kabbalah and Why was it Hidden?

There are many myths about Kabbalah, such as: it can be studied only by men over 40; it can be harmful to the mental health of those who study it unprepared. These myths are understandable, given that this wisdom was purposefully hidden by Kabbalists until the first part of the 20th century.

It is also common to refer to Kabbalah as Jewish Mysticism, which not only distorts what Kabbalah is all about, but also gives one the impression that it has no rigorous basis and no relevance to our daily lives. My objective in this monthly column is three-fold: 1) to correct these myths; 2) to show the relevance of Kabbalah to our lives in the modern world (and as some Kabbalists claim may even be the key to our survival); and 3) to encourage you to study it further.

Kabbalah is a **systematic structured method** for studying the spiritual world. To explore our physical world, we use such sciences as physics, chemistry, and biology. However, sciences study only the physical world that we perceive with our five senses.

Kabbalah recognizes that our five senses provide a limited and distorted view of the complete reality. Just as we cannot see or feel things like magnetic forces, and use tools to detect their existence, we need a special tool to detect forces in the spiritual world. This tool is the wisdom of the Kabbalah.

According to Kabbalah, spiritual reality consists of two forces, or qualities: the desire to receive for oneself and the desire to receive in order to bestow. Our "Creator" is characterized by the desire to bestow; He does not need anything from us. In order to become spiritual and connect with the Creator, we need to act like Him. In other words, we need to change our human nature characterized by the desire to receive for ourselves, to one with a desire to bestow.

Clearly, this is easier said than done.

Kabbalah (unlike religion) does not stop by telling us that changing our human nature is morally important and just, **but it tells us how to do it**. Once we "correct" ourselves, i.e., achieve "Tikkun", we can experience spiritual pleasures that go well beyond those of the physical world.

The reason Kabbalah was hidden until the beginning of the 20th century was that earlier generations **were not ready for it and did not need it**. A certain level of human development was necessary in order to be ready for Tikkun.

Continued on page 6 . . .

CBS Mission Statement:

Congregation Beth Shalom is a Reform Jewish community; warm and caring, welcoming of all, rich in tradition, committed to G-d and Israel, devoted to life-long learning, Jewish programs and spiritual growth.

CBS Vision Statement:

Congregation Beth Shalom strives to be the center for strong Jewish spiritual growth in the Mid-Cities community, where our members engage in the study of Torah, the warmth and friendship that evolves through our Jewish way of life, and our commitment to Tikkun Olam.

Sisterhood

This next month, Sisterhood is sponsoring two special events: the annual Sisterhood/Brotherhood Erev Shabbat service, and the Sisterhood Membership Celebration.

First, the Erev Shabbat service is on Friday, February 27. This warm and participatory service will have a number of different Shabbat readings and prayers. It will be led by Danielle Snailer, as well as other Sisterhood and Brotherhood members, including Rob Berg in his new role as Brotherhood president. We hope to see everyone there.

Secondly, the Membership Celebration Brunch is scheduled for Sunday, March 1, in the CBS social hall. This brunch, which is free of charge to all Sisterhood members, is being held from noon to 2:00 p.m., after religious school so that all our teachers can participate.

We are delighted that Rabbi Soltz will lead us in a review of the best-selling novel, *A History of Love*, by Nicole Krauss. This book depicts anew that ancient Jewish struggle in the diaspora – being painfully uprooted, and then, starting life over among strangers in another land. Our Rabbi has taught students at UTA about this intricate tale of love and loss, and we look forward to his review.

– Miriam Ward
Sisterhood President

**Sisterhood Membership Celebration
Luncheon and Book Review
Sunday, March 1, Noon - 2:00 p.m.
in the Beth Shalom Social Hall
Rabbi Soltz will lead a book discussion on
A History of Love by Nicole Krauss**

Tzedakah Sunday

Congregation Beth Shalom has the honor of hosting Tzedakah Sunday on February 15. The Jewish Federation of Fort Worth and Tarrant County disburses funds to over 50 local, regional, and international organizations, including over \$15,000 to Beth Shalom.

Lisa and Michael Rein will be the chairpersons of this important event. Our weakened economy and the war in Gaza increase the urgency of this annual campaign. Please answer their call for help and give as generously as you can.

Thank you,

– Barry Schneider

School Supply Donations

Congregation Beth Shalom received a letter of appreciation from the North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry for the school supplies that our congregants donated to support after-school remedial classes for Ethiopian Jewish children. This letter of appreciation will be posted on the CBS web page in the coming weeks.

On behalf of CBS, I want to express my appreciation to all the congregants who donated school supplies for this worthy cause in conjunction with the B'nai Mitzvah projects for Sam Weiger and Amanda Wallace.

– Ben Weiger

Brotherhood

Rabbi Geoffrey Dennis from Kol Ami in Flower Mound was the guest speaker for the Brotherhood Breakfast Speaker series in January. His topic of Kaballah was most interesting and enjoyed by the more than 70 people in attendance. Many thanks to Rob Berg and Don Powers for organizing the delicious breakfast.



*Great attendance
at the Brotherhood
Breakfast Speaker
Series*



Future Events:

- March 1 - Sisterhood Membership Celebration**
- March 8 - Sylvia Gray Chaverim goes to BethEl for Purim**
- March 9 - Megillah Reading, Purim Dinner, and Carnival**
- March 14 - Chanel Sassoon Bat Mitzvah**
- March 21 - Gerald Jacobs Bar Mitzvah**
- March 31 - Women's Events Luncheon at BethEl
Evening Get-Together at the
Schneider's Home**
- April 9 - Community Passover Seder**
- April 20 - CBS 2nd Annual Golf Tournament**
- May 29 - Shavuot and Confirmation**
- June 6 - Sisterhood Installation**
- June 8-12 - Camp Impact**

Congregation Beth Shalom Sisterhood Gift Shop

Be sure to see our wonderful gifts for your family, friends, and especially, your children.
15% Discount on Purchases of \$150 or More!
Remember, we support the works of Israeli artists.
Support CBS through the Sisterhood Gift Shop.

Israel Needs Our Support Yiddishkeit

It's February when you read this, but it is January when I write it. The news is full of Gaza and blood and war. We, in America, are only nervous spectators to the nightly news. We see the repeated videos showing poor Palestinians suffering from the powerful Israeli war machine. Only sometimes is there a mention of the Palestinian rockets that started the whole affair. Again the world is damning the Jews and crying for the poor Palestinians.

Our phones ring daily with calls from the many charities telling the stories of our brothers in need. It seems that the need is so great and the funds are so short. But here in the good old "U S of A", we are also suffering a shortage of funds. Those of us who are retired are watching our pension funds shrink while our sense of wealth disappears.

So, what is there for us to do? The answer is plain. We must put aside our own worries and provide what we know is needed to allow the Israeli families who face the daily problems in Israel. It may be a burden on us, but it can't compare with the burden of the Israelis who face personal safety issues and who have children fighting less than a hundred miles from their homes.

If, when you receive this **HaShomer**, the war is over, we can rejoice together. If they are still fighting, send a contribution to the Fort Worth Jewish Federation or to one of the many Jewish charities that are providing much needed support to Israel.

– *Sherwin Rubin*

Night Shelter 2008

This year, the A+ Team really did turn Christmas dinner into a magical evening!

We had **Stuart Snow** serving up "double-slice" Pizza Night to all the kids, while **Cookie Kabakoff** was our silverware and salad bar girl! **Jason Kabakoff** kept the dessert bar running like crazy. **Phil Kabakoff** and **Richard Posner** really were the best line-chefs any kitchen could ask for.

Our servers were: **Andrea Snow**, **Sheila Poster**, **Leslie Udes**, and **Stephanie Posner** - they never let a plate go out without being totally loaded with great food. **Carol Pock** was our "meet and greeter".

The evening was really terrific, thanks to the overwhelming generosity of many CBS members. Many donations were received, which allowed us to serve up a truly fine, Santa-sized dinner and dining experience.

Thanks to all who made this a very special mitzvah!



Richard Posner (l) and Phil Kabakoff keep the kitchen running smoothly.

Retaining a sense of Jewishness

About 90 years ago, F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote a short story called *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*. It told the remarkable tale of a baby who was an old man at his birth, and ages in reverse. If Hollywood were to make a movie out of this story, they would probably have some hunk like Brad Pitt star as Benjamin Button: oh yeah, that's what Hollywood did recently.

Back in 2002, Gabriel Brownstein took Fitzgerald's story and turned Benjamin Button into a little old Jewish man, vintage 1912, who ages in reverse. This story can be found in his collection of stories, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button, Apt. 3W*. "Little boy, do you want milk with your lunch? No, I vant seltzer vater."

Now, if Hollywood were to cast Brownstein's version, the perfect actor to play the Jewish Button would be Billy Crystal. Anyone who has seen Crystal's take on old Jewish men would agree he would be perfect; he has the accent, the gestures, the attitude.

It is unlikely that Crystal will have the opportunity to add this project to his many films. But if you really want to get a feel for how Billy Crystal would portray a young Jewish lad who has aged normally, I encourage you to read his book, *700 Sundays*. This book takes the reader inside the Crystal family during the 40s and 50s, and is a window into the family and circumstances that turned Jack Crystal's son into the curious case of Billy Crystal.

Both of these books are highly entertaining and probably can be purchased through amazon.com used books.

– *Dr. K*

oygevalt@sbcglobal.net



(l-r) Sheila Poster, Andrea Snow, and Leslie Udes

Would you like to honor someone's good deed, honor a birthday, special occasion or send condolences? You can do this with a donation that benefits Beth Shalom.

You may indicate a fund of your choice, or leave it to the discretion of the executive director to select it for you. Donation forms are available on the website (www.bethshalom.org), or from the office.

If the recipient is not a member of Congregation Beth Shalom, please be sure to include their address.

ARFTY

ARFTY has begun the new year planning what we anticipate being another rewarding mitzvah for our CBS youth, as well as a fun and educational experience for the less-fortunate children in our community – Camp Impact 2009. This will be our 14th year for the camp!

One of the social workers who has been there for the entire run is **Ms. Christine Gonzales**. Our relationship with Christine, who heads up the Connection program in Grand Prairie ISD and provides us with a significant number of campers each year, took a leap of faith over the winter holiday break.

Head chef at camp *every* year, or as the campers have come to know her, the "oatmeal lady," **Lynda Friedensohn**, spoke with Christine during camp last year about how we could help with some of her homeless families for the holidays. They came up with a holiday party idea, since the holidays are a time when many of her families are not in a position to provide much for the season.

Lynda was given nine families who were "distributed" to various businesses, school groups, and families for help. ARFTY took the largest family - with seven children and a single mom - purchasing gifts from their "needs" and "wants" lists. With many donations and help, we had a party for these families.

DJ **Matt Burke** provided holiday and popular music, lunch was cooked by **Michelle Feinberg** and **Rochelle Bekerman**. **Jeff "Santa" Friedensohn** provided the ho-hos, **Cindy Fratina** led the sing-along and holiday bingo, and I was just my cool, laid-back youth-director self, keeping an eye on our kids and enjoying their interaction with the children at the party.

I had double-duty, seeing my student council kids from Nichols JH (who also adopted a family), and ARFTY, as they played with the kids talked with the parents, danced with everyone, and kept the excitement at an all-time high, which was an extra reward for me. The families who participated did not leave empty-handed; in addition to material gifts, they also received the emotional gift of having had a wonderful Christmas.

A big thank you goes to all the families of our ARFTY kids, who purchased the fabulous gifts and provided help in wrapping presents, setting up for the party, serving food, and cleaning up. A special thank you goes to **Lynda Friedensohn**, who spearheaded this project and got the business and family involvement, to the **Nichols JH student council** and the **National Honor Society** who each took a family, and to **Rachel Cooper**, who worked closely with Lynda and helped organize the event from within ARFTY.

– *Al Fratina*
ARFTY Youth Director

You can advertise in

HaShomer

the monthly newsletter of
Congregation Beth Shalom

Contact the CBS office for info: 817-860-5448

B'nai Mitzvah

Amanda Wallace

Sandy and Allan Wallace are proud to announce that their daughter, Amanda, will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, February 7, at 10:00 a.m. We welcome the congregation to join our family and friends as we celebrate this joyous occasion.

Born in Arlington, Amanda has been attending Beth Shalom religious school since pre-school. She is currently a seventh-grade AP-honor student at Nichols Junior High School. Amanda is active in athletics, playing on the volleyball and basketball teams. A Girl Scout for eight years, she has received her Bronze Award and is currently working on her Silver Award.



Amanda has been involved in several Mitzvah projects. She spent several years growing her hair long enough to be able to donate 13 inches of her hair to "Locks for Love". By cleaning out neighbors' attics and garages, she was able to donate a computer, toys, and clothes to the Women's Shelter and furniture and clothes to Mission Arlington. The Mitzvah that was most important to her was donating several of her stuffed animals to the Arlington Police Department to be given to children who had to be removed from unsafe environments.

Amanda also coordinated, collected, and distributed canned foods and non-perishable items for the needy during Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. This project could not have been possible without the help from everyone in the congregation. Thank you for all your donations. Amanda continues to think of ways to make our world a better place for all.

We are very proud of Amanda's accomplishments and hard work. We want to thank everyone at Beth Shalom who has helped her through the years, including all of her Sunday and Hebrew school teachers, Danielle Snailer, Rabbi Soltz, her classmates and their parents - both near and far.

**Thank You for Saving
Box Tops for Education!**

Your clippings have brought us \$172.20
in earnings for our school.
Keep up the good work!

ADVANTAGE EYECARE

MARK SCHWARTZ, O.D.
ARLENE SCHWARTZ, O.D.

MAYFAIR VILLAGE
724 GRAPEVINE HWY.
HURST, TEXAS 76054
817-788-2020

If you can't read this, you need to see us.

Adult Education

Congregation Beth Shalom continues to offer a stimulating assortment of adult education classes for the second semester. Classes resumed in January.

The following classes are being offered:

Conversational Hebrew. (Continuing)

Taught by Dr. Jossef Perl.
Sundays, 9:30 - 11:00 a.m.

Jewish Thought. (Continuing)

The teachings of Rabbi Heschel in his book: *God in Search of Man*. Taught by Rabbi Soltz.
Sundays, 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

New! (begins Sunday, February 8)

An Introduction to Middle East Politics. A look at some of the key issues dominating the Middle East today, beginning with an historical exploration, then focusing on contemporary issues. Taught by Dr. Brent E. Sasley, Department of Political Science, UT Arlington
Sundays, 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m.

Views from Kabbalah

... continued from page 1

First, readiness for Tikkun requires human beings to have a strong desire to receive for themselves, i.e., a high level of egoism. Such a level was reached only in the early 20th century after 100 years from the inception of the "Hasskala" (modernity), and has been increasing at an exponential rate since that time.

Second, the level of development of our society today finally leads individuals to ask for the first time the fundamental question, "what is the meaning of my life?" Until a human being is troubled by this fundamental question, he/she cannot benefit from Kabbalah. Consequently, early Kabbalists (before the Ari) hid Kabbalah from the general public, so it would not be misunderstood or profaned.

When Rav Kook – the great, early 20th century Kabbalist and the first Chief Rabbi of Israel – was asked who could study Kabbalah, his answer was unequivocal: "Anyone who wants to."

In the last 100 years, all the Kabbalists, without exception, stated clearly (and on many occasions) that today, Kabbalah is open to all. Moreover, they said that it was a necessary tool to prepare ourselves to live harmoniously and painlessly in a global society and prevent crises that they predicted would come, such as the environmental and economic crises we are facing today.

– Dr. Jossef Perl

Sources:

www.kabbalah.info: Interactive online classes in true Kabbalah (in English) based on the writings of Rabbi Shimeon Bar Yochai (Zohar), Ari, and Baal Hassulam.

www.kab.tv: A TV channel with English translation from Hebrew, which provides Kabbalah-related programs, including discussions, lessons, music, children's programs, women's programs, and more.

Has your email address changed?

Please be sure to notify the CBS office if you are not receiving your News Blasts! Thanks!
janetaa@bethshalom.org

Birthdays

February 1

Josh Frisinger
Amanda Wallace

February 2

Leah Bushlow

February 3

Lauren Schwartz

February 7

Stephanie Chiarello

February 10

David Louis Spindler
David Sternblitz

February 11

Mindi Sternblitz
Jeff Visosky

February 12

Robin Licker
Ben Price

February 13

Melissa Blair

February 15

Ashley Epstein
Arielle Sasley
Adam Weiss

February 19

Daniel Barr

February 21

Alixandra Barasch
Ilan Caplan

February 23

Yasmin Feinberg

February 24

Caleb Cohen
Aliza Feinberg

February 28

Alison Wilson



Anniversaries

February 10

Darlene & Michael Dickman

February 26

Cookie & Phil Kabakoff

Daytimers Presents:

Readers Theatre of Theatre Arlington Presents:
A Breath of Spring

Wednesday, February 18, 12:00 noon
at Beth El Congregation

This group of energetic, outgoing, and creative individuals, aged 50 + present 45 minutes of entertainment, reading from *Breath of Spring*

Luncheon, catered by Subway, \$9.00

Program only, \$4.00 per person

For information/reservations contact: Barbara Rubin, 817-927-2736, or Sylvia Wexler, 817-294-1129.

The Sylvia Wolens Jewish Daytimers is a program of Beth-El Congregation with support from the Jewish Federation.

Become a Minyanaire

Just think. We have a Rosh Chodesh minyan once a month, or 13 times a year (lunar calendar).

We have a dedicated group of 6 - 7 people who attend.

We have 194 family units that equate to about 300 adults (post Bar/Bat Mitzvah).

Minus the seven regulars, we need three people to make a decision to attend minyan once a month. Three divided into 300 equals 100, or a commitment by three people to attend just one minyan out of every 100 minyans.

With 13 minyans a year, each person would make a solid commitment to attend minyan once every seven-and-a-half years!

Is this not a mitzvah we can do?

Is this not a mitzvah to the congregation?

Is this not a mitzvah to our fellow Jews?

Please refer to the schedule of services on page one for date and time of services.

Donations

(Received prior to December 16)

BUILDING FUND

In appreciation of Beth Shalom
from Alice and Steve Ginsburgh
In memory of Bill Mason and Lee Wenokur
from Klila and Brian Caplan
In memory of Rachel ben David; in honor of
Danielle's graduation
from Stacey Silverman and Marty Zelling

MORTGAGE REDUCTION FUND

In memory of Bernie Coleman
from Lynda and Jeff Friedensohn
In honor of Randy Rosenstein's Bar Mitzvah
from Shelley and Steve Sternblitz
In memory of Lorean Gardner
from Toni and Norm Epstein

ONEG/KIDDUSH FUND

In memory of Dirk Hellwig, Norris Helwig,
and Lillian Bushlow
from Nora and Todd Bushlow
In memory of Evelyn Grossman
from Andrea and Stuart Snow
In support of Congregation Beth Shalom
from Janet and Jerry Aaronson

CAMP IMPACT FUND

In memory of Anna Coller
from Leslie and Lee Schulman
In memory of Coston Gardner
from Toni and Norm Epstein

CHEVRA KADDISHA FUND

In memory of Nettie Bailin
from Eileen and Mort House

LEE AND RICHARD WENOKUR MEMORIAL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

In memory of Lee Wenokur, Bill Mason,
Rachel ben David, Bernie Coleman, Daniel
Frost and Thomas Brennan
from Andrea and Stuart Snow
In memory of Lee Wenokur
from Elizabeth and Mark Genetti
from Diane and Marv Fishman
from W.R. Cook
from Etta Schmerler
from Joanne Harmon
from Judy Hurewitz
from Sanford and Sher Kaplan
Jeffrey and Mary Topf
from Judy Olds

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL FUND

In honor of the engagements of: Erica Fisher
and David Bekerman, Molly Frisinger and
Matt Printz, Sarina Bekerman and Matt
Schneider
from Faye Grossman

EDUCATION FUND

In memory of Ida Siegel and David H. Siegel
from Hy Siegel

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

In honor of Rabbi and Mary Soltz
from Martine and Larry Thomas



Community-Wide Mitzvah Day

Now that the holidays are behind us, it's time to focus our attention on our annual, community-wide social-action event: **Mitzvah Day 2009** - scheduled for **Sunday, April 19, beginning at 9:00 a.m.** in the Great Hall at Congregation Beth El.

Because we have a wide variety of activities, Mitzvah Day is suitable for the entire family, and we encourage everyone to come out and support this meaningful event! In the next couple of months, look for an announcement that will list the various projects. As usual, the Carter Bloodmobile will be here so you can perform a double mitzvah - participate in a meaningful activity and donate blood!

We can still use household items and school supplies: small appliances, shoes and clothing in good repair; paper items for the kitchen and bathroom; soap; bottles of shampoo and lotion; non-perishable food items; notebooks, pencils, glue, scissors, and rulers.

During the next month or so, look around your house. If you have items

you no longer use, or clothing you no longer wear, bring them to Beth Shalom prior to April 19. While shopping, throw an extra tube of toothpaste, some notebook paper, or a package of colored pencils in your basket. New or used, household goods or school items, your contribution will be welcomed and appreciated by someone in our community.

Mark your calendar, now, for this very worthwhile event. Join us April 19, at 9:00 a.m. for a meaningful, enjoyable, and fulfilling day.

- Ben Weiger

Social Action Committee Chair



New Member Applications

If you, or anyone you know, is interested in joining the Beth Shalom family, please call our executive director, Janet Aaronson, 817-860-5448

Yahrzeits

February 6-7

Irwin Lackow
Skippy Reynolds*
Ben Rubin*
Lillian Rubin*
Harry Dearing, Sr.
Barbara Freeman
Gertie Strausberg*
Jack Kirshbaum*
Reva Lustig*
Billie Schneidkraut*
Jean Mandelkorn
Lois Abel
Henry Burger
Eve Glickman
Jack Lefer*
Rosalie Russell*
Sylvia Stoltz

February 13-14

Marilyn Bloch*
Bernard Ciocci*
Lawrence Cooper
Elsa Greenwald
Sidney Steinberg
Abraham Lefer*
Aaron Weiss
David Henry Rubin*
Mary Alice Jolkovsky
Philip Needleman

February 20-21

Anna Levy
Efraim Nasserfar*
Louis Oxman*
Susan Abraham*
Naomi Binder*
Eli Cobbel*
Abraham Rothschild
Ruth Bolding*
Leonard Elster
Dorothy Hilbert King*
Benjamin Feld*

February 27-28

Maxwell J. Rodenberg*
Harry Waetzman*
Ester Fleischer
George Abraham*
Isadore J. Sternstein
Beverly Chovis Rothschild*
Donald Garver*
Max Kornitzky*
Israel Margolis
Hilda Needleman*
Daisy Silverberg
Elaine Gould
Norma Reynolds*
Morris Schneidkraut*
Marion Goodman
Samuel Weiss

* Memorial Plaque in Sanctuary

*The Congregation records with
sorrow, the passing of:*

Ron Vickers
Mahli Yacher, aunt of
Michael Kornitzky

Eye on Middle-Eastern Affairs

... continued from page 1

tated the decision to attack, and combined they all trumped cross voting considerations.

First, Hamas really was raining rockets and mortars down on Israel over the course of the last several years. Although the number of Israelis killed by the fire was very minimal, and even property damage was not all that great (in relative terms), the fact remains that thousands of projectiles were falling on Israel.

Not only was this a military attack on a sovereign state, but Israelis were suffering: children were found to be wetting their beds, schools were closing, people were always running to air-raid shelters as air sirens consistently went off. It's considered a cliché of the Israeli government by now, but it really is true that no country can tolerate for long these kinds of attacks.

Second, the Israeli military had for some time been recommending that Israel attack Hamas, to stop the rocket fire, and to stop the build-up of its arsenal. Third, pressure was building on Israeli leaders by citizens to do something, and as elected officials these leaders had to respond. The fact that an election was coming up soon I'm sure was somewhere in their thoughts (again, Olmert, Livni, and Barak would not be human if it wasn't), but there's no evidence to suggest it was the overriding or determining motivator.

In addition, Israel's deterrence credibility – which it relies on to cause its enemies to think twice before attacking it – was almost in tatters. This is the result of a number of developments since the 1980s, but the 2006 Lebanon War sharpened everyone's awareness of it. The war was poorly managed at both the political and military level, and in many, perhaps most, ways Israel lost rather than won – not in the least because Hezbollah stayed nearly fully intact and has managed to increase its military capability since then to be-

yond pre-war levels. This while Israel achieved none of its stated objectives. (One benefit, though, has been more caution on the part of Hezbollah; you won't see it firing across the border or kidnapping soldiers any time soon.)

The lesson learned by many hostile groups was that Israel was weak, and could be easily defeated because it didn't have the stomach for the long fight. Continuing to absorb Hamas rockets only strengthened that belief.

I personally believe that Israel was bound to attack Hamas sooner or later, and indeed that such an attack was necessary and fully justified in accordance with international law. Still, it's hard to ignore the suffering that the Gaza Palestinians are going through: the destruction of their homes and infrastructure, the lack of shelter and food, the killing of their mothers, fathers, and children (I'm not sure which of the three have it worse). I'm only talking of course about civilians; it's the nature of war that soldiers (I use the term loosely here) take the chance of being killed.

But it's not enough to say we feel bad but it's all Hamas's fault, or that a smaller number of civilians are dying today so that there will be less killing tomorrow. Compassion and morality are among the highest virtues of Judaism, and if we don't exercise it on behalf of even those who don't like us (and it's not by any means clear that most Palestinians feel this way), then are we really any better than those who seek to kill us for simply being Jews?

– Brent E. Sasley, Ph.D.



From the President

... continued from page 2

some of you have heeded the call. In fact, one congregant who attended again because of my personal appeal recently remarked to me: "I was quite engaged by the discussions put forth and presented, and look forward to coming again and again."

Al and Cindy Fratina recently gave me the opportunity to address the young adults in ARFTY at its January 11, Camp Impact meeting. I spoke to the group about the state of our synagogue, as well as my desire to rebuild and rejuvenate our services, and asked their help in achieving this objective. I told them that I wished to form a **Student Service Corp** (SSC). The SSC would be comprised of individuals that, by signing the sheet, agree to participate in at least one service of their choosing each month.

By joining the SSC, they further recognize that it is their duty and obligation as an adult ritual member of the Beth Shalom community to perform this mitzvah. I left the form with them to turn in later, so as not to feel pressured by sending it around in front of me. Each would sign up of their own free will and volition.

I told my wife on the way home that I would be happy if only four to six ARFTYites signed up, realizing and recognizing how foreign services may be to their regular routines.

My daughter Shelby brought the list home to me. I am pleased to tell you that 15 young adults signed the sheet!

It should be stated that there are also individuals working on different ideas to inject creativity into our service, while returning to the "Chamishe" (warm and inviting) atmosphere replicated at the recent Chanukah Service written about above.

Spirituality is defined as connecting to G-dliness. G-dliness implies a relationship with our creator. For any relationship to grow and stand the test of time, it must be mutual. There are two components to a relationship with G-d in order for this mutual relationship to flourish – prayer, which is when we speak to G-d, and Torah, which is when G-d speaks to us. While these components can and should be pursued at home or while traveling, it also requires communal participation in order to reach its maximum potential.

Whatever your excuse may be for not attending services, I ask you: What will your excuse be once the current one that you are using is no longer valid?

I want to count hearts. Can I count yours?

– Stuart Snow, President
Congregation Beth Shalom