

HaShomer

MAY 2009

Congregation Beth Shalom

IYAR/SIVAN 5769

Schedule of Services

May 2009

Iyar/Sivan 5769

Friday, May 1, 8:00 pm

Simcha Service

Saturday, May 2

Torah Study 9:00 am

Shabbat Service 10:00 am

Torah: Achrei Mot-Kedoshim

Friday, May 8, 8:00 pm

Saturday, May 9

Torah Study 9:00 am

Shabbat Service 10:00 am

Torah: Emor

Friday, May 15

Tot Shabbat 6:00 pm

Shabbat Service 7:30 pm

Saturday, May 16

Torah Study 9:00 am

Shabbat Service 10:00 am

Torah: Behar-Bechukotai

Friday, May 22, 8:00 pm

Saturday, May 23

Torah Study 9:00 am

Shabbat Service 10:00 am

Torah: Bamidbar

Sunday, May 24, 9:00 am

Rosh Chodesh Sivan Minyan

Friday, May 29, 9:00 am

Shavuot I Service and Yizkor

Friday, May 29, 8:00 pm

Confirmation Service

Saturday, May 30

Torah Study 9:00 am

Shabbat Service 10:00 am

Shavuot II



Simcha Blessings for all Birthdays and Anniversaries on the First Friday Evening Shabbat Service Each Month.

All who will be celebrating birthdays and anniversaries during the coming month will be called to the bimah before the Torah for a blessing.

From the Rabbi

On the eve of Yom HaShoah, the world was once again reminded of the ever-present threat to Jews and the total inability of humanity to learn from the lessons of the Shoah.

I commend our President, as well as leaders of Canada and other nations who refused to attend the UN's so-called meetings to condemn racism. Durban II, just like its predecessor Durban I, became the pretext for more anti-Israel, anti-Semitic rhetoric from Palestinians and sovereign nations whose human rights records mirror those of Nazi Germany.

Erev Yom HaShoah witnessed a vituperative anti-Israel and anti-Semitic invective from Iranian president Ahmedinejad. While a number of participants walked out of his speech, far too many remained. Israel, in fact, recalled its ambassador to Switzerland over the Swiss president's warm greeting of the Iranian leader.

We remembered Yom HaShoah with more than tributes to our victims; we resolve Never Again!

We and the rest of the world are now tested to ascertain whether "Never Again" is merely a mantra or a call to action.

We pray that Ahmedinejad is yet another loud of voice but short-of-action despot.

But, can we assume that risk?

— Rabbi Ned J. Soltz



Views from Kabbalah:

The History of Kabbalah and The Zohar - Part I

The patriarch Abraham is the first known Kabbalist. We do not know how Abraham, who grew up and worked in a family of idol sellers, arrived at the knowledge of Kabbalah.

As the Bible tells us, Abraham opened his tent and welcomed passersby, attempting to spread his revelation and the method he discovered. A small group of those who stopped by and joined him for the free food and lodging also had the need to discover the meaning of life beyond the physical world. They became the Israelites and later the Jews.

Kabbalah was then passed on between Kabbalists over many generations. Each Kabbalists added his unique experience and personality to this body of knowledge. They documented their spiritual achievements in languages relevant to the stages of development of

their generations.

The development of Kabbalah up to the destruction of the First Temple and the return of the Jews from Babylonian exile is documented in the Bible. The Bible, and particularly the Torah, is not a historical document. (We leave the preoccupation with what-happened-where to another religion.)

The Torah is a Kabbalistic guide and a tool for achieving *Dveikut*, i.e., achieving the goal of Kabbalah, which is reaching the highest spiritual level as intended for us by the Creator. All the stories described in the Torah represent internal events within a single person, keeping in mind that every single person contains in him/her the entire world.

In the period between the First and Second Temples (515 BCE - 70 CE), Kabbalah was already being studied (as

Continued on page 4 . . .

From the President

With the recent hiring of cantor-intern **Sheri Allen** as our part-time spiritual leader, and **Rabbi Jordan Parr** to lead us during the High Holy Day period, our spiritual team is now in place. While their presence may be part time, I can assure you that their spiritual input and guidance will be full-time. Both will be working closely with the Ritual Committee and each other in maintaining continuity, as well as introducing their own ideas and unique style to our services.

Since Rabbi Parr may not be well-known, I thought a brief biographical sketch would be in order. Ordained by Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 1986, Rabbi Parr has led congregations in Dallas and Plano, Texas, and in Augusta, Georgia. He was most recently Rabbi (the last eight years) at Adat Chaverim in Plano.



Rabbi Parr has taught courses in Holocaust, Jewish History, and Zionism on the university level. Widely published in the field of medical ethics, Rabbi Parr is in demand as a teacher and speaker. He has published articles in such wide-ranging areas as abortion, active euthanasia, the environment, special needs camping, and the relationship of Judaism to baseball!

Rabbi Parr has also served on numerous boards and committees, both in the Jewish community and in the not-for-profit world. He has also been an innovator in the field of Jewish education, instituting a radically innovative high school program in his synagogue, and being on the faculty of several Jewish camps.

A native of Detroit, Michigan, Rabbi Parr is also a graduate of the University of Michigan (BA, History *cum laude*, 1980). He lives in Plano with his wife and two daughters.

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HaShomer

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Editor: Hy Siegel Editorial Assistance: Janet Aaronson

The entire congregation will have the opportunity to "Meet the Rabbi", as Rabbi Parr will lead us in services on a weekend to be announced soon.

And, while I have written about our future spiritual leaders, I would be remiss if I didn't comment about the recent Passover Community Seder led by (soon to be) Rabbi Emeritus Soltz. Attended by nearly 60 people, Rabbi Soltz was at the top of his game as he weaved the story of Passover through the Hagaddah in an interesting, entertaining, and enlightening manner. It is indeed bittersweet to know that this would be the last Seder led by Rabbi Soltz; I am grateful for his service over the last eight years.

Finally, I also wish to thank president-elect Barry Goldfarb, Brotherhood president Rob Berg, Sisterhood president Miriam Ward, and Melanie Garver for their efforts in preparing the delicious meal that was served. The whole community is elevated by the actions of such dedicated people and spiritual leaders that we are blessed to possess.

B'Shalom,

– *Stuart Snow, President
Congregation Beth Shalom*

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.

Sylvia Gray Chaverim

Invite you to join them
Sunday, May 3, 12:30 p.m.
In the Beth Shalom Social Hall for:

A Performance by Standing Room Only

(Theatre Arlington's Children Performers)

Bring the kids following Sunday School!

\$5.00 per person for lunch: pizza, salad and fruit.

For information or to RSVP, please contact
Rosalie Cagan, rccagen@sbcglobal.net,
or call 817-684-7197.

Sylvia Gray Chaverim made possible through a grant from the Jewish Federation of Fort Worth and Tarrant County. You need not be a member of Congregation Beth Shalom to participate in the Sylvia Gray Chaverim.

Sisterhood

As I write this article, Jews the world over have just celebrated Pesach, which marks Adonai's liberation of our ancestors from bondage in Egypt. And, just as our ancestors were set free, we, too, are set free. But, what does "freedom" really mean for us?

Our freedom is not that extolled by our modern culture - the freedom to do whatever we want, whenever we feel like it. We are set free from slavery, for a specific task. We are set free to be Adonai's hands and feet in this world to make it a better place for all creation. But, most of us struggle to live out the Jewish life with our families in this small area of Texas, and we often forget about the needs of the whole world.

So Jews unite to carry out widespread social action. Did you know that a small portion of Sisterhood dues makes its way to Israeli families living in hunger and poverty through baskets of food staples and nutritional education? This example shows that our freedom to work for tikkun olam makes an impact far greater when we unite collectively with other Jews.

As members of WRJ, our little Sisterhood is everywhere WRJ is! Our voices are heard, our hearts are felt. When we are members of Sisterhood, members of Congregation Beth Shalom, members of the Jewish Federation, our freedom from slavery for tikkun olam makes a greater difference.

- *Miriam Ward*
Sisterhood President

Coming Events:

May 1 - Simcha Shabbat
May 29 - Shavuot and Confirmation
June 5 - Simcha Shabbat
June 6 - Sisterhood Installation
June 8-12 - Camp Impact
June 19 - Farewell Dinner for Rabbi and Mary Soltz
June 26-27 - Rabbi Soltz's Last Shabbat Services

Daytimers Presents:

A Trip to Fossil Rim Wildlife Center in Glen Rose

Wednesday, May 20, 9:45 a.m.
at Beth El Congregation
 Meet at the Beth-El Parking Lot

*Super-special price of \$15 includes:
van transport, admission, and bottled water.*

Take a drive through the scenic wildlife in the comfort of two 15-passenger vans. Get a close-up look at free-ranging herds of majestic African savanna wildlife. There will be a stop at the half-way point of the drive at the Overlook Cafe.

You may purchase lunch or bring your own.

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.

What is the Birkat HaChammah?

This year, we celebrated a strange Jewish observance on Wednesday morning before our first Passover Seder. Many Jews gathered to watch the sun rise, and they said a blessing called Birkat HaChammah to honor the creation of the sun. This blessing is often used upon seeing lightning or some astrological wonder like a meteor shower. You can Google the blessing and there is a complete section of Wikipedia devoted to it.

This year, we recited the blessing on Wednesday, April 8, at sunrise. The last time we did this was 28 years ago. This year we observe the 206th cycle of the sun. (206 X 28 = 5768) There you have it. We are in the Jewish year of 5769. How 'bout them apples?

The blessing is always said on a Wednesday morning because the sun was created on Wednesday. Our Talmudists did a lot of talking about the exact time to say the blessing, and they even allowed for making it kosher to say it 'til noon if it is cloudy and you can't see the sun.

I think I have mentioned before that I have enormous respect for our Jewish ancestors. They showed remarkable talent in creating our calendar. They observed the movement of the sun and calculated the differences in its cycles. Based on their observations, they plotted a calendar accurate for thousands of years in the future.

This calendar always allows holidays to fall on specific days of the week, and for extra days to be added to years to make up for the necessary fractions of days that the sun movement requires. It is not their fault that they didn't learn about the earth going around the sun until much later in our history. They were not limited, as we may be today, by scientists who claim that the world is billions of years old.

We are lucky to be in the Reform movement and not required to believe that the world is only 5769 years old. We can respect our tradition and see the beauty of our rituals and custom. We can teach our children the biblical stories and pass to them our love and respect of Jewish history.

I hope you won't forget to say the next Birkat HaChammah on that special Wednesday in the year 2037.

- *Sherwin Rubin*



Congregation Beth Shalom Sisterhood Gift Shop

We are having a **BIG SALE** in the Gift Shop.

Almost Everything is 15% Off!

All Chanukah Items are 40% Off!

We Have Sales on: New Tallit, New Tallit Bags, and New Kippot, Arriving Soon.

Melanie, Valerie, and our helpers hope to see you soon.

Views from Kabbalah

... continued from page 1

it has been since) in groups. From the destruction of the Second Temple (70 CE) to our times, the development of Kabbalah can be divided into three periods. Each period was dominated by one (or sometimes more) of the greatest Kabbalists, who documented in their writings the additional knowledge and insights they achieved.

In the first period, the major developments took place during the second century, when The Zohar was authored by Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, known as the "Rashbi". Theologians in the modern period have claimed that The Zohar was written in the 13th century by Rabbi Moshe de Leon.

This conclusion is dismissed by the great modern Kabbalist Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam) based on the high level of spiritual correction that was required to create a book like The Zohar. The Rashbi was a pupil of the famous Rabbi Akiva (40 CE - 135 CE), who was tortured and killed (together with almost all of his disciples) by the Romans.

Following the capture and imprisonment of Rabbi Akiva during the Bar Cochba revolt, the Rashbi, with his son Rabbi Elazer, escaped and hid for 13 years in a cave in the Galilee. After the death of 24,000 of Rabbi Akiva's disciples, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Yehuda ben Baba authorized the Rashbi to teach Kabbalah to future generations, as he had learned it from them. Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and four others were the only members of Rabbi Akiva's Kabbalah group to survive.

Around 150 CE they emerged from the cave with The Zohar and with a crystallized method for teaching and studying Kabbalah. The Rashbi reached the 125th step of spiritual correction, which is the highest level any human being can

achieve during his/her life in this world. The Zohar tells us that the Rashbi and his son Rabbi Elazer reached the level called *Eliyahu the Prophet*, meaning that the prophet Eliyahu himself came to teach them.

The Zohar was written in Aramaic using a unique form of parables. It tells us that Aramaic is "the reverse side of Hebrew," i.e., the hidden side of Hebrew. Rashbi actually did not write The Zohar himself; he dictated its content to Rabbi Aba, who possessed a special skill for writing in code language that only those worthy of studying Kabbalah could understand.

We do not know how The Zohar disappeared subsequently. According to legend, it remained hidden in a cave in the vicinity of Safed, and was found several hundreds of years later by Arabs from the area.

A Kabbalist from Safed purchased fish in the market one day, and was astonished to discover that the wrapping paper included an important Kabbalistic text from the period of the Rashbi. He found the remaining pieces of paper and collected them into a reconstituted book. (Do not hold me responsible for the accuracy of this story, I am only the messenger!!) Somehow the book ended up in the personal library of Rabbi Moshe de Leon in 13th century Spain.

– 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/eng/: 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.

Religious School

We have reached the end of the school year, and are excited to announce two events that mark this time. First, the religious school picnic will be held at Stovall Park on Sunday, May 17, from noon - 2:00 p.m. (weather permitting). The Brotherhood will again provide the hot dogs and chefs to grill them - all you have to bring are chips, drinks, and side dishes to share.

Second, confirmation will be held this year on Friday, May 29, at 8:00 p.m. Be sure to attend this warm and inspiring service, written by our confirmands. The students presented for confirmation are: **Shawn Goodman, Joshua Jessup, Ethan Goldfarb, Jesse Friedensohn, Zachary Markson, Benji Cope, Hannah Posner, Rachel Walkup, Andrew Lobel, Michael Fleischer, David Rousch, Aaron Rousch, Hannah Walcek, Emily Plaistow, and Jaime Florez Ben Abib.**

– Danielle Snailer
Religious School Director
daniellesnailer@aol.com



Community Yom Ha'atzmaut Celebration at Beth-EI

Sunday, May 3, 12:15 - 3:00 p.m.

Yom Ha'atzmaut, the community program celebrating Israel Independence Day, is a wonderful opportunity for everyone to learn more about Israel. This year we'll have a professional Israeli dance instructor help us celebrate the day. We will also have a political forum, an archeological dig, and a keepsake to take home. To round out the day, we'll enjoy delicious Israeli food.

The cost is \$6.00 for adults and children over 12; \$3.00 for children ages 3 - 12. Children under 3 are free. The cost includes all food and activities. If you plan on attending, please RSVP to the Federation office at 817-569-0892.

Sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Fort Worth and Tarrant County, with financial support from the Dan Danciger/Fort Worth Hebrew Day School Supporting Foundation and Hartman, Leito, and Bolt, LLP.

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

Mitzvah Day at CBS

Second through eighth-grade kids, teachers, and parents, participated in a community-wide Mitzvah Day activity at Congregation Beth Shalom the morning of April 19. Participants made pet beds to distribute to clients of Meals on Wheels who have pets. I was very impressed with the 10 complete pet beds we will give to Lynell Bond, the liason for Meals on Wheels.

As discussed in the assembly, it is a mitzvah in Judaism (exemplified by the story of Rebecca at the well) to care for animals, as well as for human beings. Thanks to all our kids, teachers, and parents, for giving some of their time to help others in need.

Below are some pictures from the event.

– **Ben Weiger**
Social Action Committee Chair



Y'esh Lach Koach Corner

Sam Weiger, son of **Fran** and **Ben Weiger**, won his first trophy at a United States Tennis Association Juniors Tournament held at the Las Colinas Country Club. Sam lost his first game, then won his next three games to win the consolation trophy in the boys under 14 age group. Congratulations, Sam!

We rely on you to let us know when a member of Beth Shalom has celebrated a simcha, endured a loss, or is ill.

Please call the office 817-860-5448, or email to janetaa@bethshalom.org.

Birthdays

May 1
Richard Cook
Jerry Paul
Hannah Walcek

May 2
Julie Sondecker

May 3
Paige Levine

May 4
Jay Feinberg
Howie Pock
Chris Scotese
Jeffrey Smith

May 7
Fran Weiger

May 8
Linda Dunn
Harold Loveless

May 9
Feli Spindler

May 10
Mark Mowry
Sandy Reiser

May 11
Ben Sherwin

May 12
Julie Eisenfeld
Rachel Walkup

May 13
Ellen Schubach

May 15
Shira Feinberg
Jason Weiner

May 16
Jason Kabakoff

May 18
Evelyn Fleischer
Michele Rothschild

May 23
Jeanne Franklin
Pauline Pelletier

May 24
Marian Feld

May 25
Steve Levine
Jerry Lindell
Brian Moses

May 26
Steven Dickman
Hannah Jeffreys
Mark Schwartz

May 27
Nevin Levy

May 29
Lena Pack

May 31
Lauren Fratina

Anniversaries

May 1
Cricket & Richard Cook

May 15
Barbara & Dick Chiarello

May 24
Rena & Howard Frost

May 25
Laura & Larry Fleischer
Dina & Jerry Lindell
Carolyn & Paul Solomon

May 29
Phil Pelletier & Aimee
Israel-Pelletier

May 30
Valerie & Roger Carlone
Shelley & Scott Jessup

May 31
Laurie & Scott Sherwin

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 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.

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

Donations

(Received prior to May16)

MORTGAGE REDUCTION FUND

In honor of Trish and Randy San Antonio's anniversary; in memory of Fay Garrick from Andrea and Stuart Snow

In honor of Larry Bushner from Linda and Ron Elsenbaumer

In memory of Ruth Goldsmith from Debbie and Marty Goldsmith

In memory of Robert Jessup, Fay Garlick, and Michelle Zucker from Melanie Garver

In memory of Naomi Binder, Irvis Thomas, Isabel Thomas, Joseph Lazovick, and Lillian Lazovick

from Martine and Larry Thomas

In memory of Sidney Soltz from Rabbi and Mary Soltz

In memory of Isidor Landsberg from Lee and Phil Landsberg

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

In appreciation of Rabbi Soltz from Rose and Ed Pound

CAMP IMPACT FUND

In memory of Phyllis Katz Stuart from Sorai Stuart

GENERAL FUND

In memory of Carolyn Finkelstein and Fanny Nancy Finkelstein from Dolores and Barry Schneider

EDUCATION FUND

In memory of Arlene Levy Godfrey and Jean Mazer

from Linda and Ron Elsenbaumer

In memory of Arthur Schatten from Hy Siegel

ONEG/KIDDUSH FUND

In memory of Michelle Zucker from Melanie Garver

CHEVRA KADDISHA FUND

In memory of Andries Voet from Loesje and Elliott Blumberg

RICHARD WENOKUR MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

In memory of Robert Stuart from Sorai Stuart

IRA UDES MEMORIAL BIMAH FUND

Wishing good health to Sylvia Rubenstein from Shelley and Steve Sternblitz

Bikkur Cholim

The Social Action Committee, in collaboration with Sisterhood, have begun a program to visit those in need of personal attention. As many of you know, two of our congregants, **Harold Mandel** and **Richard Cook**, are currently living at Broadway at Pecan Plaza.

Ben, Fran, and Sam Weiger visited with Harold and Richard on Friday, April 3, and conducted a Shabbat service with them. Harold and Richard enjoyed the visit, service, and good talk.

We want to conduct one Shabbat service each month at this facility. If you are interested in participating in this program, please contact Ben Weiger, 817-860-5165, weiger@sbcglobal.net; or Christy Rousch, 817-268-3306.



Drinking the cup of wine.(l-r) Harold Mandel, Ben Weiger, Sam Weiger, Richard Cook.

Yahrzeits

May 1-2

Isadore Friedman*
Sidney Bushner*
Elwood Green*
Rosalind Pier Solomon*
Esther Loveman
Abe Jolkovsky
Joseph Wiener*
Aghdas Rafi Mayeri
Rubin Udes*
Ida Bella Kaplan
Sidney Soltz

May 8-9

Sylvia Gray*
Stanley Kasten
Jerome Snow
Art A. Saling*
Jack Kamen*
Syde Kirshbaum*

May 15-16

Joseph Kleir
Dorothy Price*
Lisa Blatt
Rhea Levine
John A. Stern*
Fay Caplan*
Arthur Schatten
Harry Springer
Louis Binder*
Rose Friedman*

May 22-23

Sussie Katz*
Daniel Clearfield*
Howard Coleman
William Forrest Franklin*
Dorothy Greenfield
Dorothy Gould*
Anne Lewis*
Della Nass
Evelyn Burger*
Kathy Solomon
Isaac Kulakoff
Sydney Rubins*

May 29-30

Ralph Glickman
Richard Wenokur*
Mary Kulakoff*
Daniel Lucas*
Gertrude Oxman*
Bernard Loveman
Irving J. Shapiro*
Timi Rousch
Samuel Price*
Richard Easton
Herbert Freeman

* Memorial Plaque in Sanctuary

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