

Sinai Temple

BULLETIN



Sinai Temple's 75th Anniversary

For Your Consideration

Rabbi Mark Dov Shapiro

I am going to make a change, but you have to read several paragraphs into this article before learning what the change is going to be. You will need to read that much because the change I am proposing comes out of a long, heartfelt, complex, serious process.

The change has to do with mixed marriage and the way I respond to it.

In and of itself, mixed marriage is a complicated issue. Depending on who you are, mixed marriage may or may not be a significant fact of life for you. Or it may, in your opinion, be a blessing or a curse. However, one thing is for sure. This past Yom Kippur morning Sinai certainly made a bold statement about mixed marriage. I believe many of you were pleased and surprised when I addressed one aspect of mixed marriage. It was my honor at that time to recognize the presence of the many non-Jews in our congregation who devote themselves to our mission as a synagogue.

As I said on Yom Kippur, "It is important for the congregation to recognize how much non-Jews bring to us. It is important for those of us who are Jewish not to take your participation in Sinai for granted... Just in case, we haven't been clear, today I am pleased to say - Thank you. Your love is part of the tapestry that makes our congregation holy."

Little did I anticipate, how positively the congregation would respond to my words. Those of you who are married to non-Jews were touched. Non-Jews were exhilarated and proud. People whose children are married to non-Jews told me that they were going to send the sermon to their children.

Others commented how the sermon reflected a new world. For the truth is that 20 years ago, it would never have occurred to any of us that we might need to or want to speak as I did about mixed marriages in the community. The demography was different then. None of us knew what was developing or how our perception and reaction to mixed marriage would change. We could not have realized that non-Jews would become so involved in so many ways in building the Jewish future. We could not have understood how close to normative mixed marriage would become.

Except mixed marriage is really not quite normative. That is why some congregants shared their conviction with me that, although we want

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Saturday Morning Services

Saturday Mornings at 10:30 a.m.
Mazal Tov to our B'nai Mitzvah

December 2--Joshua Kessler
Son of Lisa and Steven Kessler

December 9 – William Awad
Son of Susan and William Awad

December 16 - Alex Novak
Son of Donna and Jeff Novak.

Saturday Torah Study

Torah study every Saturday morning at 9:00 a.m.

Chanukah at Sinai

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22

THE LAST NIGHT!

STARTING EARLY AT 7 P.M.

Bring your menorah from home with 9 candles.

Latkes, songs, and games galore for a very bright Shabbat.

FRIDAY EVENING SERVICES – 76-878

FAMILY SERVICE at 7:00 p.m.

December 1

Songs, prayers, and story.

KABBALAT SHABBAT at 6:00 p.m.

December 8

Veggies and snacks at 5:30 p.m. followed by a one hour service.

FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE & CHANUKAH

FIRST NIGHT at 8:00 p.m.

December 15

You are invited to the service & celebration of our Adult Bat Mitzvah class.

CELEBRATING THE 8TH NIGHT OF CHANUKAH at 7 p.m.

December 22

Candles, latkes, and games galore for a very bright Shabbat. Bring your menorah with 9 candles.

FRIDAY NIGHT CLASSIC at 8:00 p.m.

December 29

Shabbat Shalom..

Mission Statement

Sinai Temple is a welcoming and inclusive Reform Congregation where our members pursue a continuing journey of Jewish growth. We are guided by the history and traditions of the Jewish people as we encounter the challenges of the modern world. We encourage participation in prayer, life-long Jewish learning, and social justice within a joyful, creative, and compassionate community.

Message from the President Steve Weiss

WE HEAR YOU!

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur the Board of Directors attempted to contact almost every adult Sinai member and for the most part we were successful. The vast majority of the members were very pleased to be called and thought it was a really nice thing to do. A number of members had special requests and suggestions, and, of course, some had concerns and criticisms. There are some issues that cannot be addressed. For instance, when we have one member say, "there's too much Hebrew in the service" and another who says, "there's not enough Hebrew", it would be quite a feat to make both congregants happy. I ought to add that the board enjoyed making the calls, too.

However, there are many things that we can do to make Sinai a more welcoming and responsive synagogue, and I'd like to respond to some of the comments to let you know that the Rabbi, the Cantor, and the temple leadership are listening and responding to congregants' concerns.

"There should be a confidential way that members can air grievances or address sensitive problems". The Board and the Committee on Membership and Synagogue Community recognize that the best time to address the concerns of a dissatisfied congregant is before that member thinks about leaving. The Board and the Executive Committee serve the entire congregation; if members have particular suggestions or problems, they should feel comfortable calling or writing us.

"Why do we have two sessions for the religious school? It's inconvenient." Actually, the Religious School Committee has already started looking into this. When the religious school had 300 students, we simply didn't have the space to consider one session. However, at our current enrollment, we may be able to go to one session, if we can do so in a way that doesn't compromise our educational goals.

"Sinai needs to do more to attract new members and make them more comfortable." We agree wholeheartedly, and we're starting to implement some new ideas. We're revising the "package" that is given out to new members, and the Committee on Membership and Synagogue Community hopes to develop an "ambassador" program in which new members are paired with existing members so that the latter can make sure the former are integrated into synagogue life.

"Sinai ought to have more low-cost events for synagogue members." It's a very good point. We're aware that sometimes being Jewish seems to be very expensive. We're looking at events that we can schedule for little or no cost to congregants.

These are just a handful of the comments. There were many other suggestions that we're looking at to see how we can respond. After all, Sinai belongs to all of us!

**The Adult Bat Mitzvah Class of
5767/2006
Cordially invites the congregation
To join us when we are called to
the Torah
As B'not Mitzvah

Friday, December 15
8 p.m.
Shabbat Vayeshev

Pamela Kalman
Jackie Neiman
Susanne Simon**

The Sinai Temple Bulletin is published monthly by Sinai Temple, Springfield, Massachusetts. This is Issue Number 2 for the year 2006-2007.

Mark Dov Shapiro..... Rabbi
Emily Sleeper Mekler..... Cantor, Music Director

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Visit our website: www.sinai-temple.org

1931-2006

Celebrating 75 Years!

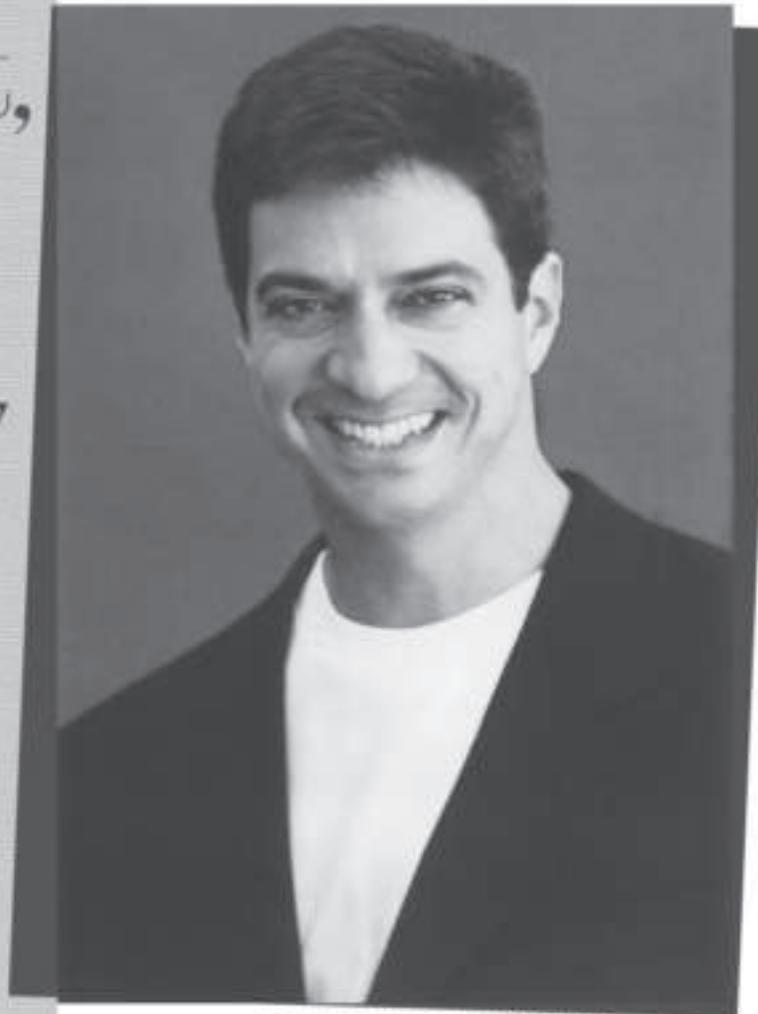
**75th Anniversary
Chanukah Concert,
Candle Lighting
& Dinner**

**Sunday, December 17
4:30 to 7:00 p.m.**

**Featuring
Sam Glaser
Guitarist, Composer
& Performer!**

**PLUS Students of Our
Religious School!
PLUS This Fall's Adult
Hebrew Learners!
PLUS
Dinner Will Follow!**

*Sam Glaser is one of the top ten Jewish artists
in the USA. He has performed internationally.
His music appeals to ages 5 to 95.*



RSVP NOW

We've got room for the
first 200 people.

Make your reservations TODAY
by calling the Temple office
736-3619 or email Stacey
Osowski, Program Director –
perlski@verizon.net

*Sam's concert is made possible by a gift from
Neil and Wendy Webber.*

*The art project is made possibly by a
gift from Carl Reiner and Jody Helmus
in memory of Amy Reiner.*

From the Cantor Emily Sleeper Mekler

I must begin by apologizing for inadvertently omitting the names of Sheila Shear, our Director of Education; and Joel Solomon when thanking our High Holiday readers in my November article. We are very grateful to Sheila and Joel, along with all of our High Holiday Torah readers for honoring Sinai Temple with their participation.

As many of you know, I will be taking a 3-month sabbatical from December 18th to March 12th. Many months ago, when thinking about potential plans I decided that I wanted to honor my dear father (z"l), who passed away late January of this year, by doing something related to the Yiddish language which he loved so much. I decided to research opportunities to study and learn Yiddish, especially as it relates to singing. One of the places it led me was to a professor at Florida Atlantic University. I am very much looking forward to learning from her. I also discovered (and have been to visit) FAU where thousands of Jewish LP's of all kinds from all over the country are housed on the 5th floor of their library. I will be doing some volunteer work with this amazing collection, which I will tell you about when I return. I am eagerly looking forward to this exciting opportunity to learn more about the Yiddish language and, in this small way, to honor my father's memory.

On Sunday, November 5th I led a group of Sinai women on a field trip to visit Mayyim Hayyim, the pluralistic mikveh, in Newton, MA. We spent a beautiful afternoon together learning about the modern interpretation of utilizing the renewing benefits of this ancient ritual. This trip was to learn about immersion, but no one "got wet"! Mayyim Hayyim is only about two and a half years old, but there have been about 3000 immersions in that short period of time. It is not only used by Orthodox women, before weddings and for conversions, but it is also used by both men and women to mark times of life transitions of ALL kinds.

The building is tranquil in its natural setting, but especially when one enters the door to this facility. Part of it is an old house built around 1865 and the other part, where the 2 mikvaot (plural for mikveh) are housed, is modern and state of the art with particular attention to creating a feeling of comfort, calmness and serenity.

I would love to take another group of Sinai women on a field trip in the spring (the facility is used by men, as well). Please look for an ad in a subsequent bulletin for more details. I hope you will be able to join me.

I will see you in March. (Though I won't officially be back until mid-March, See you on Purim, I wouldn't miss it!).

"Zie g'zunt" (be well).

Chanukah Questions and Answers

How do we observe Chanukah today?

Chanukah is almost entirely a time for celebration, although it can be more than that. This year, for example, how about dedicating one Chanukah night to tzedakah? Give your gift(s) to Sinai's own Isaiah Fund for the Hungry, which helps feed the hungry in our community or choose a charity of your own liking.

How do we prepare the candles when Chanukah arrives?

Place the candles in the chanukiah (Chanukah menorah) from right to left.

How many candles are used?

On the first night of Chanukah one light is kindled. On the following night, two lights and so on until on the eighth night, eight lights are kindled. This does not, of course, include the shammas which is the candle used every night to light the other candles of the day.

Where does the chanukiah go?

If possible the chanukiah should go near or at a window. In this way passersby can see the burning candles, which means according to Jewish tradition, that we have helped in the process of Pirsum Ha-nais—the Publicizing of the Chanukah Miracle and Story.

How do we light the candles?

Just after nightfall, say the blessings. The first two are said every night. The third is only said on the first night.

After the blessings light the candles by going from left to right so that the additional light of each night is kindled first.

Do we do anything different on Shabbat (Friday evening, December 15 and 22)?

Yes. On that night we light the chanukiah first and after that Shabbat candles. For a really good time, don't do your candles at home. Bring yourself and your candles to Temple for a service, good food, and fun.

SUPER TZEDAKAH SUNDAY— DECEMBER 3, 2006

It's Your Jewish Community. Be Part of It.

On Super Tzedakah Sunday, more than 100 volunteers come together to build a community based on compassion and justice. It's the Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts' annual phone-a-thon, and the impact is enormous. With only our voices and a vision we all share, we will reach out to thousands of donors and raise more than \$150,000 to support the programs and services that are making a difference in the lives of Jews locally, nationally, in Israel and around the world.

For more information or to volunteer, please contact Debbie Peskin at the Jewish Federation of Greater Springfield, 737-4313 x121.

Blessings for Chanukah

ברוך אתה. יי אלהינו. מלך העולם.
אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר של חנוכה

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, who has sanctified us with commandments and commanded us to light the Chanukah candles.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik neur shel Chanukah.

ברוך אתה. יי אלהינו. מלך העולם.
שעשה נסים לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, who performed great wonders for our ancestors in those days at this season.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, shehah-sah nee-seem la-vo-tay-nu ba-ya-meem ha-haim bazman ha-zeh.

ברוך אתה. יי אלהינו.
מלך העולם. שהחיינו וקימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this moment.

Ba-ruch a-ta A-do-Nai e-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam, she-he-che-ya-nu ve-ki-ye-ma-nu ve-hi-gi-a-nu laz-man ha-zeh.

Chanukah Service: Friday, December 22 Starting EARLY at 7 p.m.

It's the last night of Chanukah. Bring your chanukiah (menorah) and candles. There will be a service with candle lighting for everyone. Songs. Latkes. And games for Chanukah.

Chanukah Party with a DJ Brian Nicks: Thursday, December 21 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Just for kids. Open to all students in Grades 5 & 6 plus Grades 7 & 8. Pizza. Latkes. Learn the latest games. Bring your Jewish friends and get a prize for each one of them. This event is made possible by the Religious School Special Projects Fund.

CHANUKAH!! CHANUKAH!!

The Green Menorah: A Commitment to "green" Chanukah

When the Maccabees rededicated the Jerusalem Temple in 165 B.C.E., legend tells us that one days' worth of oil kept the Temple menorah going for eight days! What if the "miracle" of Chanukah led us to consider how we might use less oil in our day? Can we help today's world conserve energy to the point where one day consumption is spread over eight days? Can we reduce our energy consumption by 7/8's?

To make our Temple Chanukah more "green," Sinai's Social Action Committee will be giving away energy efficient, cost effective compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs during Chanukah.

The message is as easy as changing a light bulb: If you could conserve energy and help stop global warming in one simple step, wouldn't you? CFLs use 75% less energy than incandescent light bulbs. This means less production of greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, and toxic waste. If every U.S. household replaced one bulb with a CFL, it would have the same impact as removing one million cars from the road. For more information, visit the Reform movement's Religious Action Center website. www.rac.org

Chanukah Tzedakah: Ner Shel Tzedakah, Sunday, December 17

The latkes are wonderful. The candles look beautiful. Chanukah is a joyous time of the year for us Jews. THIS YEAR our Social Action Committee suggests something NEW. On the third night of Chanukah, December 17, we encourage families to donate the value of the gifts they would ordinarily exchange (or the gifts themselves) to local or national organizations assisting the poor. Let this be an evening for NER SHEL TZEDAKAH - THE LIGHT OF TZEDAKAH.

Get On Our Case: Through to December 17!

Have you got any children's books at home that your children no longer use? The books are still in good shape and you're wondering what to do with them?

Bring your children's books (pre-school up to young adult) to the Temple. We are going to collect as many books as possible on the bookshelves in the Temple entrance. We will then donate the books so that our old books can be brand new material for other children.

Please get your books on our case! There are plenty of young readers in Springfield waiting for your books.

Books about Israel and Israeli DVD's available for loan at JCC

The Anna P. Housen Israel Desk has placed a large quantity of books and DVDs about Israel in the JCC lounge. There is a book case and cupboard in the back of the lounge which houses this collection. All community members are welcome to borrow these books.

The mystery of the buried time capsule

Rumor has it that in 1981, when Sinai celebrated its 50th anniversary, a time capsule was created and then buried. BUT...The mystery concerns where that time capsule may have been placed. After some hard digging and finding lots of tree roots, our primary investigator, Joel Solomon, has determined that the capsule may have been hidden more expertly than anyone could imagine. So...do YOU know where it might be? Please call the Temple office. Thank you to Joel for suggesting that we turn to all the bold readers of these pages to solve the "mystery" of the buried time capsule.

Are you interested in joining a committee?

Our busy Temple is looking for some busy, creative people who might want to become involved in a Temple committee. "I'm too busy for a committee," you reply. "Do not fear." Committees can take up lots of time or take up little time. Try one out and see how it feels. No commitments required. You could consider the newly formed Fundraising Committee or the Adult Education Committee. Think about Social Action, Ritual, or the Religious School Committee. Call the Temple office if you are interested or have questions.

Are you interested in joining a committee on Israel?

Here's a committee that doesn't even exist yet, but if you feel strongly about Israel or if you might like to think about how Sinai could celebrate Israel's 60th anniversary in 2008, this might be a committee for you. Call Rabbi Shapiro or e-mail markdov@sinai-temple.org.

Social Action Committee Tuesday, December 19 at 7:30 p.m.

You are invited to visit the Social Action Committee at its next meeting. The agenda is always varied. Your input and ideas are very welcome.

Scroll of Life



The Scroll of Life is a work of art in the Oneg Shabbat Room. It was created by Presentations Gallery of New York. The Isaiah quote at the bottom of the Scroll was taken from the Yom Kippur Haftarah as an expression of hope.

The Scroll has space on it so that Sinai members can commemorate either joyous events or memorialize loved ones. Each contribution of a plaque on the Scroll will be used to enrich the life and strength of Sinai.

The cost of each plaque is \$200. The inscription may be 3-4 lines with a maximum of 27 spaces per line.

FOR BIKE RIDERS – Sinai Temple is Going on The Fourth Annual Riding4Reform Bike Ride March 18 – 22, 2007

Our Temple member, Andy Moskovitz, has committed to going on this amazing Israel ride! If you are interested, NOW is the time to make plans too.

Join Andy and many other riders from across the USA to see Israel the way you've never imagined it! Ride your bike from Jerusalem to the Sea of Galilee and on to Haifa. And, while you're at it, raise money for our Reform movement in Israel.

Interested? Visit riding4reform@impj.org.il. Or speak to Andy (413-533-9209) or Rabbi Shapiro.

Stacey Osowski is looking for volunteers to be on the FAMILY GAME NIGHT Committee. Family Game Night is scheduled for Saturday, February 10, 2007. Please call Stacey at 736-3619 x 13 if you can be part of this fun evening.

You're Invited to Israel July 1 - 13, 2007

Dear Friends -

Let's go to Israel! I am eager to share the adventure with you. We are going to see old sites as well as very new sites. There will be museums as well as active days of kayaking on the Jordan River and exploring the Golan Heights by jeep.

Financial details, including travel subsidy information, will soon be available. A detailed itinerary is on our website. www.sinai-temple.org

Subsidies and scholarships will be available for both adults and children.

Shalom,

Rabbi Mark Shapiro

Our Tour will include:

- Roundtrip airfare from New York to Tel Aviv
- 2 nights in Tel Aviv, 2 nights in the Galilee
- 6 nights at the Inbal Hotel in Jerusalem
- Breakfast daily & five dinners
- Transfers, entrance fees, and portorage
- Roundtrip bus transportation from Springfield to airport

You're also Invited To an Information Session On the Israel Trip Tuesday, December 12 7:30 p.m.

Everything you wanted to know about going to Israel with Sinai Temple this summer.

A slide presentation along with all the news about Sinai's Israel Trip .

Rabbi Shapiro will give an overview of our trip scheduled for July 2007:

- What we're planning to see. What we're planning to do.
- Hotels, sites, packing tips. Scholarship details.

For further questions, please call the Rabbi at 736-3619

What is a Jewish Wedding Ceremony: How can it "work" if one partner isn't Jewish?

Sundays, January 21 & 28 at 9 a.m.

Rabbi Shapiro will lead us in a study of the Jewish wedding ceremony as we explore how it might be adapted for mixed marriage. We will also talk about the shape of our changing Jewish families and how we understand the very phrase - a Jewish family. If you are interested in this conversation, please plan on attending both sessions since they will be connected.

Monthly Morning Service Wednesday, December 6 at 7:30 a.m.

We meet on the bimah for a service of 20 minutes. Breakfast follows. Those who need to leave for the rest of the day are free no later than 8:15 a.m.

Future "morning minyan" services will take place on Wednesdays, January 3, February 7, March 7, April 4, May 2, and June 6.

First Thursdays (mostly): Lunch and Learn Thursday, December 7 12:00 – 1:15 p.m.

Bring your lunch to the Oneg Shabbat room for a discussion of contemporary Jewish concern with Rabbi Shapiro. . Future discussions are January 4, February 8, March 8, April 5, May 3, and June 7.

WICKED – ANOTHER READING OF THE KING SAUL AND KING DAVID STORY

Torah Study with a "twist"

Saturdays at 9 a.m.

Starting January

No two biblical characters are more real to life than Saul and David. The life of each is filled with intrigue, adventure, triumph, and sorrow. Saturday mornings this Winter, Rabbi Shapiro will lead an exploration into the self and psyche of these two men. Everyone is welcome!

From the Director of Education Sheila Shear

Shalom Chaverim,

There is some exciting news to share this month. In recent months I have been working with a committee of parents in an ongoing process of new and creative ways for children to be engaged while learning here at Sinai Temple. We have been working on a way to change from two sessions of school each Sunday, to a Single Session. This would mean that all students from Kindergarten through to Seventh Grade could be at school during the same period of time.

Why, after all these years, are we investigating these new ideas? This change will allow us to offer a wide variety of enriched learning opportunities that are engaging to students, it will help create an environment of true community and sense of belonging and an added bonus of this change will be the convenience of a single drop off and pick up instead of the two that many families are currently experiencing.

While this is still very much a work in progress here is some of what we have been working on and thinking about.

We are working on a number of different possible plans, some involving a single session of two and a half hours (possibly from 9 to 11:30 a.m.); some involving a session of perhaps three hours (possibly from 9 a.m. to noon). In doing our research, we have learned that many Reform congregations follow the kinds of formats we are considering.

The content, in addition to what the wonderfully talented teachers on our staff already teach, can include more practice for Hebrew skills as well as Chugim (interest groups) that would be individual and age related interest such as music, art, photography, and even sports (related to Judaism!) just to name a few. With a single session and some extra time, we can offer family programming that is more inclusive, fun and interesting and integrate time for social clubs such as Alef Bet, Gimmel Dalet and Hey Vav into the offerings.

We know you will have many questions. There will be time on a Sunday in February for a full morning so that your questions can be answered. If you would like to share your thoughts and ideas right now, we would love to hear them while we are in the planning stages of just what will be the right plan for Sinai Temple. Please speak to Joel Solomon, the chairperson of this sub committee (567-0073), or to me.

We will continue to keep you all apprised of this new and exciting idea for Sinai Temple Religious School.

L'Hitraot and Chag Sameach.



Jonah Fouser enjoyed doing Sand Art at the Club Gimel-Dalet on October 29. He was joined by Madeleine Neiman, Andrew Katz, Kayla Mernoff, Colin Hurley, Ben and Josh Correia, Abbey Solomon, Jesse Cohen-Lindfors, Rachel Michaelson, Dani Goldstein, Lucy Levitt and Nick Cordeiro.

Jewish Summer Camping Can Make All the Difference in Preparing a Jewish Child for the Future

Our Reform movement runs two remarkable summer camps in the Berkshires. One is called Eisner; the other is called Crane Lake. Last year several Sinai students attended each of the camps. Your child would love either camp. Scholarships are available for sessions in July or August. Please speak to Rabbi Shapiro as soon as possible.

Scholarships for Free

If your son or daughter is planning to attend any kind of Jewish program this summer, please take advantage of the Temple scholarship program. Thanks to the Joseph Emanuel, Rabbi Herman Eliot and Adele Biederman Snyder Memorial Fund, scholarships are available in small and larger amounts. We are also thankful to the family of Edna Simon and Judy and Michael Cohen who support summer scholarships as well.

Your confidential request should go to Rabbi Shapiro no later than March 15.

Judaica Shop Corner

We light the first Chanukah candle on Friday night, December 15th! Your Judaica Shop will have more days and longer hours for your shopping convenience. See our enclosed flyer for these extended hours and many gift suggestions.

Shopping Day for youngsters will be Sunday, December 3rd from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the front hall.

Thais Fischel, 786-9577 and Bobbie Cossin, 565-9970

B'nai Tzedek Teen Philanthropy Program Mason Dunn-McDonagh

I decided to join the B'nai Tzedek Youth Foundation one year ago because I think it is a very interesting way to get actively involved in project dedicated to Tzedek. B'nai Tzedek is a program for teens after their bar/bat mitzvah. Teens donate \$125 to start their B'nai Tzedek funds. The Jewish Endowment Foundation matches the donation with \$125 and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation adds \$250 to the account. This means that each teen has \$500 in their B'nai Tzedek account. Each year, teens give away the interest on their money to Jewish organization.

There are 550 teens in Western Massachusetts who are B'nai Tzedek members. There are 23 teens who are taking a leadership role as members of the B'nai Tzedek Youth Foundation, a teen advisory board and foundation.

I applied for a position on the B'nai Tzedek Youth Foundation because I wanted to go beyond what I was already doing for tzedek and to meet teens who are interested in doing tzedakah and helping other people. I hoped to get experience and knowledge and learn the art of philanthropy- how it works with grants and applications.

The most memorable moment of the B'nai Tzedek Youth Foundation was at our final meeting last year. The group had to make decisions about how to split the money that we raised and to see how our funds can help Jewish organizations working to repair the world. One important lesson I learned during the process is that although I am good at working with others who have different ideas, I am also confident to make decision based on my own morals. I was able to speak my mind and advocate for the organizations that most closely matched my personal philanthropy mission statement.

As part of the B'nai Tzedek Youth Foundation, I have been a participant on the Hazon Jewish Environmental Bike Ride. I decided to get involved with this fundraiser because protecting the environment is important to me. I want to make sure that future generations are living in a healthy environment. This is the mission of Hazon. I worked as crew for the past two years. I raised money by asking family and friends. I also asked other teens to help me with my fundraising. Most of this was done by email or by asking people to help me reach my fundraising goal.

During the ride, I cheered on the riders and helped to support the riders by setting up rest stops and making food for very hungry riders! The highlight for me, the most powerful part of the ride was seeing all of the riders come up over the hill into Manhattan for the last mile of the ride. The riders and crew were so happy. People were celebrating, signing and rejoicing. I was so exciting.

My advice to any teen thinking about getting involved in Tzedek is: Don't be afraid to get involved. B'nai Tzedek is so rewarding. I like to think about the Hillel quote, "If I am not for myself, then who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, then what am I? And if not now, when?" If anyone at Sinai Temple wants to learn more about this program or my involvement, they can email me at zxrock09@yahoo.com.

www.sinai-temple.org

The Susan Broh Tikkun Olam Scholarship: An opportunity for young people to build a better world

The family and friends of the late Susan Broh are so very pleased to report on the success of this past summer's award in memory of Susan.

Sinai Temple was able to offer TWO students, Sarah Bernstein and Lisa Braun, generous stipends that enabled each of them to pursue a summer of volunteer work in an area that made the world a better place.

Donations to the Susan Broh Tikkun Olam Scholarship are welcome so that we can plan for 2007. Your donations are used to allow us to "pay" a young person for summer volunteer work. Young people apply for the stipend during the winter. Awards are made in Spring for the coming summer. Thank you for supporting the Broh Scholarship.

PJ LIBRARY is for Kids and Parents at Bedtime

Parents and children have warm memories of the special time right before bed, when they snuggle together and end the day with a book. Reading stories and listening to music are among the more powerful and nurturing early childhood experiences. The PJ Library, the newest initiative of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, wants to turn these special moments into Jewish moments.

The PJ Library is a program which seeks to engage Jewish families with young children in Jewish life. Any Jewish family living in Western Massachusetts with children between the ages of six months and six years is eligible to receive a monthly mailing of a Jewish children's book, CD, or the occasional parenting book. The PJ Library is FREE for families during the first year of participation, with a nominal donation requested each year thereafter.

If you have not already signed up to receive PJ Library books, please consider enrolling your child today. Go to www.pjlibrary.org. If you live in Western Massachusetts but have relatives or friends living elsewhere, a subscription to the PJ Library (only \$84.00) makes a great gift! Contact Rachel at (413) 439-1942 for additional information. Bring Jewish bedtime stories and songs into the homes of your young loved ones; it is a gift to start a lifetime.

We Got Heavy With Food On Yom Kippur

Thanks to everyone at Sinai, we managed to collect 4,709 pounds of food during our High Holiday Hunger Project.

Thank you to everyone who brought all that food together on Yom Kippur. This truly was a "fast" which had meaning for the larger community.

to be welcoming and inclusive, Judaism is more likely to be assured when a Jew does marry a Jew. Of course, I did not discuss that on Yom Kippur because Jewish marriage was not my topic. But I would be disingenuous if I did not say I agree with the preference many congregants have for Jewish/Jewish marriage. *Endogamy (Jews marrying Jews) remains for the Reform movement and most Jews across the Jewish world the understood path towards the Jewish future.* That, in fact, is one primary reason I have only officiated at marriages between Jews in all my years as a rabbi. This position had absolutely nothing to do with my personal feelings towards the Jews I knew who may have married non-Jews. As a person, as a human being, I was always pleased to learn that another human being (in this case a Jewish one) had found a life partner. As Mark Shapiro, I wished a Jewish young man or woman happiness and fulfillment in their forthcoming marriage.

I could not officiate at the wedding, however, because I believed that as a rabbi I did not have a role to play in the marriage of a Jew and a non-Jew. I had no role to play for three reasons.

1. If being ordained as a rabbi meant that I was now charged with being a guarantor of Jewish survival, I could not see the marriage of a Jew to a non-Jew accomplishing that goal. I was able to do weddings not primarily as a functionary of the state. That is what a justice of the peace does. I was only able to do weddings because Jewish tradition empowered me as a rabbi to perform a Jewish ceremony for Jews.

2. I believed that my not participating in mixed marriages made a symbolic statement to future couples and the larger community that “in-marriage” was the Jewish path to be chosen.

3. I believed that the ceremony I performed as a rabbi assumed two Jews were standing before me. It was a Jewish ceremony suffused with Jewish symbols, history, language and values that only made sense if both marriage partners lived and believed the ceremony. I have said to many couples, “I respect your desire to have a rabbi at your wedding, but out of respect for you, I think it is inappropriate to force one of you to pretend to be a Jew for the five minutes under the chupa. If we take each other seriously and if we take the ceremony’s words and symbols seriously, it just doesn’t make sense for a non-Jew to be part of a Jewish wedding.”

But what if a couple were to come to me and say the following, “Rabbi, we are in love. One of us is Jewish; the other is not. But the non-Jew is not practicing another religion and together we are committed to creating a Jewish home. If we have children, we will

raise them exclusively as Jews. Even before that, however, we want to make our home Jewish. We are willing to study and learn something more about Judaism. The one who is not Jewish cannot convert to Judaism now. The one of us who is Jewish may not have engaged Judaism very much as an adult, but if you will help us Rabbi, we would still like to work towards some kind of Jewish home that will reflect us honestly. Will you work with us? If we commit to a Jewish future, will you also officiate at our wedding?”

Well....here is....the...news...from me....

My answer starting this month to a couple like this one would be, “Yes, let’s talk. And if you are true to your word about learning and then giving yourselves an address in the Jewish world, I will officiate at your wedding.”

Notwithstanding what I have just said, this is my formal statement to Sinai that I am willing to experiment with a new position on officiating at mixed marriages. During the next year, on an experimental basis, I am willing to officiate at some mixed marriages with the following understandings.

1. I think I can officiate at some mixed marriages as a rabbi and work for Jewish survival if I broaden my definition of what I am doing. I believe, for example, that unlike Christianity, for Judaism, it is the family – the household – that is the molecule, the smallest element that carries the identity of the whole. I also certainly believe that a Jewish household can encompass a non-Jew. On that basis, then, I could officiate at the wedding of a Jew and a non-Jew if together they saw their wedding as the beginning of Jewish home. This would require a commitment from the couple to me as to their plans. (I envision our working together for at least 6 to 12 months before the wedding.) It would also require trust from me since we would be talking about events that would unfold over many years after the wedding ceremony. This would also mean that I would only do marriages of this sort for people I already know. In other words, the Jewish partner would have to be a member of Sinai or the child of a member.

2. When it comes to the ceremony that I might perform for mixed marriages, I think you can see that the presence of a couple where one partner is not Jewish will require a unique and thoughtful response. If words and symbols have real meaning, I won’t be able to say and do precisely what I have done for other weddings under the chupa. The truth is that I haven’t yet figured out how to adapt the wedding ceremony I know and love. This will take some time and much consideration. It will be a Jewish ceremony, but it will be different.

So what comes next? I have a few thoughts about next steps.

1. I hope you will read this article a second time in order to be sure that you understand what I intend and that I have been as clear as I should have been.

2. I hope you will share this article with your children or with family members for whom my words may be of particular significance.

3. I hope you will attend the two Sunday mornings (January 21 & 28 at 9:00 a.m.) I am setting aside for discussion and learning on this topic. This change in my practice has tremendous implications. It touches on the nature of Jewish ritual, the nature of the Jewish family, and the meaning of Jewish living. It also potentially affects every Sinai Temple household. Studying these matters together should be very important.

4. Finally, I hope you will also remember the larger message I shared with you on Yom Kippur morning. At that time, I talked about our Mission Statement and focused quite extensively on the ways in which Sinai must always remain a “welcoming and inclusive Reform congregation.” I spoke about our embracing couples in the congregation who are mixed married, about our embracing those in the congregation who have converted to Judaism, and, needless to say, I intended to honor and embrace those many households where Jews are married to other Jews either by birth or by choice.

Having spoken about our desire to create an open and joyful community, however, I also went on to refer to the other part of our Mission Statement that describes Sinai as a congregation “where our members pursue a continuing journey of Jewish growth... We encourage participation in prayer, life-long Jewish learning, and social justice...”

I referred to this second part of the Mission Statement to underscore what Sinai ultimately represents. Once we are all inside the doors, our goal does remain Jewish growth. Not all of us will come to this place via the same route, but once we are here, I do envision us traveling a very similar path. We are here to grow as a Jewish community and to work towards the flourishing of the Tree of Jewish Life.

Even as I may change and we all change, our fundamental focus does not waver. We remain committed to grasping the Tree of Life and holding it fast for generations to come.

I welcome your thoughts. I welcome your responses. I look forward to continuing our journey of Jewish growth in the months ahead.

From the Brotherhood President Dan Cohn

What does it mean to be a member of Brotherhood? As long as we have been in existence, our members have been dedicated to tikkun olam, repair of this world, through active involvement in youth education, adult education, social action and yes, fellowship activities - all of which contribute to the enrichment of our synagogue communities.

Our members - our brothers, our sons, our grandsons - find greater meaning in their lives through their involvement with Brotherhood; Men just as committed to their Brotherhoods and to their congregations as were their fathers. Today, Sinai Brotherhood does not take the participation of adult Jewish men in temple life for granted. Today's Jewish males must be encouraged to learn, to feel, and to appreciate the gift of being Jewish.

Once each year, we at Sinai honor a member that we feel is doing more for the community than is the norm. We search for that one special individual that gives selflessly, without looking for recognition or acknowledgement but improves the lives that he or she touches simply because it is the right thing to do: the essence of tikkun olam. I speak of the Rabbi Snyder Award, presented annually to an individual that has given just for the sake of giving.

In the past we have honored Gunther and Thais Fischel, Zel Lavin, Sherman Rome, Sidney Snegg, Ed Merrill Raymond Cossin, Margot Rosenberg, Sy and Helen Weiner, Salena and Ernie Blake, Jim Gordon, Steve Sussman and George Dickstein. Please help us select this year's recipient by completing and returning to the Temple office the enclosed form. Your input means a great deal in our being able to recognize the next person that will be chosen for this honor.

Please join us on Friday, March 23rd for the Rabbi Snyder Awards Dinner to be held prior to services that evening.

I would also like to share with all of you that I have been asked to serve on the Executive Committee of National Brotherhood. Naturally, I accepted.

Thank you and shalom.

Daniel Cohn
Brotherhood President

Rummage Sale February 25 – February 27

Look in your closets. Look under the bed. Then bring your rummage to the back door of the Temple. We're collecting clothes (and most other stuff as well). Your rummage is welcome. If you can VOLUNTEER a day or even 10 minutes, please let the office know.

This Passover Ask the Four Questions in Hebrew (And Understand Them Too!) Sinai Temple's Project Hebrew Continues In January 2007

Did you begin studying Hebrew as part of Sinai's 75th Anniversary Celebration this Fall?
Did you advance in the Hebrew you already knew?
Did you miss this past Fall's Hebrew program, but now you want to join?

In January, February, and March (leading right up to Passover), the Adult Education Committee is bringing Hebrew learning your way.

Classes will be offered at different levels on three different days starting January 21. Please register by filling out the form on this page!

By learning Hebrew, this Passover you yourself can be the WISE CHILD!

*Schedule of Hebrew Classes for Winter 2007 on the following dates:

	Sunday	Tuesday	Wednesday
January	21, 28	23, 30	17, 24, 31
February	4, 11, 25	6, 13, 27	7, 28
March	4, 11, 18, 25	6, 13, 20, 27	
April	1		

Please enter your first and second choices in the "Choice" columns.

Choice	Day	Time	Teacher	Choice	Day	Time	Teacher
Beginner Hebrew – For those starting out. Learn to identify Hebrew letters and begin to put words together.				Advanced Beginner – Refresher course. Review the alphabet & basic reading; then on to reading & understanding basic prayers – special focus on the Haggadah. (Recommended for last Fall's beginners.)			
	Sun	9:00 – 10:00 am	TBA		Sun	9:00 – 10:00 am	TBA
	Tues	7:30 – 8:30 pm	TBA		Tues	7:30 – 8:30 pm	TBA
Advance Beginner, Level Two. Last Fall's "advanced beginners" continue their learning here. Special focus on the Haggadah.				The Haggadah in Hebrew - The perfect course for those who can read and have begun to develop some comprehension of biblical or prayer book Hebrew.			
	Sun	9:00 – 10:00 am	TBA		Wed	8:00 - 9:00 pm	Rabbi Shapiro
	Tues	7:30 – 8:30 pm	TBA				

Dear Adult Education Committee:

Count me in! I want to be a Hebrew learner.

Enclosed please find my check for \$36 (payable to Sinai Temple) to cover the cost of my textbook.

Name _____ Phone _____ E-mail _____

Mail to: Sinai Temple, 1100 Dickinson Street, Springfield, MA 01108

Sinai Temple Funds: An Opportunity for Tzedakah

Please consider Sinai and tzedakah when important occasions happen in your life. Those honored will receive a card from the Temple office letting them know about your thoughtfulness. You can return this form to the Temple office (or drop by the office to make your donation in person).

The suggested minimum donation is \$10.00. (To honor the memory of a loved one with a permanent memorial plaque, contact the Temple Office at 413 736-3619.)

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund is for tzedakah and the general needs of the community.	Rabbi Jerome S. Gurland Human Relations Fund distributes an annual award to a project which improves the quality of life in the Springfield area.
Cantor's Discretionary Fund enriches music programming at Sinai.	College Outreach Fund in memory of Shirlee Cardarett enables us to stay in contact with our "Sinai Alumni."
Religious School Special Projects Fund offers new and creative programming for our students.	Family Education Fund in honor of Buster and Shirley Stahl creates new and exciting family education.
Joseph Emanuel, Rabbi Herman Elliot and Adele Biederman Snyder Memorial Fund enables teenagers to attend summer camps, retreats and study programs.	Temple Beautification Fund in memory of Bernerd Dunn beautifies the gardens around the Temple.
Library Fund enriches our library.	Art Fund in memory of Andy Berger organizes art contests for all children at Sinai.
Temple Oneg Shabbat & Holiday Fund sponsors special programming throughout the year.	Abraham and Edna Simons Camp Scholarship Fund supports youngsters who want to attend Jewish summer camp.
Isaiah Hunger Fund is distributed annually to local agencies serving the hungry and the homeless.	Programming Fund in memory of Arline and Arthur Rogers is used annually to enrich one or more aspects of Sinai's programming.
Prayer Book Fund purchases new prayer books and Torah commentaries.	Berman-Snieder Fund in honor of Pat Barr supports programming for Israel.
World Crisis Fund notifies congregants about political and moral emergencies in the world. All monies collected are sent to deal with whatever crisis we have as our focus.	Caring Community Fund in honor of Joan Rosenbaum is a resource for building the feeling of community at Sinai.
Baby Gift Fund provides every Sinai baby and his/her parents with a Jewish bath toy as well as a parenting book for birthday #1.	Susan M. Broh Tikkun Olam Fund provides subsidies for young people spending their summers doing social action.
Youth Group Fund established by Linda and Jerry Wainick helps support our growing youth groups (SPFTY and JOY) from Grades 7 to 12.	

Please print clearly

Occasion _____

Your name & address

Phone _____

Please inform:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Mazel Tov to:

Claire Cohen-Stelzer on the birth of her granddaughter, Sophie Jeanette, born to her children, Debra and Matthew Reynolds. Sophie's older sister is Kendall Rae Reynolds.

Announcing the First Ever....

SPFTY Babysitting Bash!

Saturday evening, December 9th

Drop off your kids for an evening of fun-filled activities for your children ages two through 10. There will be snacks, games, crafts and lots of fun the whole night led by SPFTY.

The evening will take place Saturday, December 9th at Sinai Temple from 7:00 - 10:00 p.m. The cost is \$15.00 per child and \$10.00 for each additional child.

All proceeds go to the Sinai Temple youth group. If you have any questions, please contact Heather Tariff at (413) 478-8903. Reservations required with names and ages of children. Please include information about any allergies.

Sinai Temple BULLETIN

1100 Dickinson Street
Springfield, MA 01108
(413) 736-3619
<http://www.sinai-temple.org>

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The Brotherhood is Seeking donations!

There will be no raffle this year.
Instead, we will be having a
Silent Auction and Buffet S upper.

This is your chance for some
Free advertising!

Well, cheap, anyway.

For the price of your donation,
You will have a display card of your own de-
sign

Extolling the virtues of your business!

We are accepting goods, services, gift certifi-
cates,

Almost anything...

Be a Mensch!

Attention Business Owners!
The Sinai Brotherhood is holding a
Golf Tournament this spring

Now is your chance to be a sponsor!
Contact Jack Henrie

Before all the good spots are taken!!!
jhenrie@sinaibrotherhood.org

