



Sinai Temple Bulletin

Take Back Your Time:
Rediscover Shabbat

May / June 2017
1 Iyar-6 Tammuz 5777

From the Rabbi's Study...

One of the more moving moments of my entire rabbinate came at the recent CCAR convention in Atlanta. I, along with two other 1967 ordained Rabbis, had just been honored on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of our ordinations. The experience was powerful. To be in front of 550 rabbis who had stood up as we were called to the Torah...that was totally overwhelming. It was also humbling beyond words.

After the three of us in unison chanted the blessing after the reading of the Torah, I silently recited the *shehechyanu*. Truly, if ever there were a *shehechyanu* moment, this was it. The intensity of my gratitude to the Holy-One-of-Blessings for having brought me to that moment defies description.

And then, as I returned to my seat next to my rabbi-daughter, Riqi, I thought to myself, was I worthy of this? Beyond having survived fifty years through all of the things happy (and not always happy) that my rabbinate has been about, what, at least for me, was this *really* about that I and my other two colleagues were so honored?

For the next days until the end of the convention, colleagues were wishing me a *mazal tov* and/or saying, *yi'yashar koch'kha* (May your strength remain upright) over and over again. And then one asked me, "How long, seeing as how almost all of your classmates long ago retired, do you plan on continuing to remain in the congregational rabbinate?" The answer, at least to myself, came quickly: as long as I can continue to keep on growing as a rabbi.

Now in Hebrew we call a scholar, *talmid chakham*. Most people translate the term as "wise student." But that's not its real meaning. Its real meaning is "student of the wise." I've never seen myself as a scholar. But, for the entirety of my rabbinic career, I have seen myself – and continue to see myself – as a student. And that really is what my rabbinate, first and foremost, is about. I know that as a rabbi I am a teacher of Judaism, but the only legitimacy in that is that I am, before that, a student, a *serious* student of Judaism. That is why I learn Torah (which is the expression we use instead of saying, study Torah), literally every day.

As you might know, I retired once. It was some nine years ago. But my retirement lasted only one day. I woke up the morning of that first day after retirement and I was miserable. I found myself saying, what did I retire for? I still have so much unfinished rabbinic business left to do! But then – and maybe this was the hand of Divine Providence in operation – a couple of hours later, my phone rang. The call contained an offer to become the part-time pulpit rabbi of a Sephardic congregation very close to my home. I grabbed the offer. And I have not regretted doing so for even a moment since.

continued on page 3

Shabbat Services

Fridays in May:

May 5 – 6:00 Shabbat "L'dor Vador"

May 12 – 7:30

May 19 – 7:30 Teacher Appreciation Service

May 26 – 7:30

Fridays in June:

June 2 – 6:00 Erin Mernoff & Dave Hopkins Aufruf

June 9 – 7:30 SPFTY Service + Camp Blessings

June 16 – 6:00 Services and Shabbat dinner

June 23 – 7:30 p.m.

June 30 – 7:30 p.m.

Saturday Mornings

May 6, 13, 20, 27 and June 10, 17, 24

Torah Study: Every Saturday morning at 9 A.M.

Saturday Morning Services

All Saturday services are at 10:15, EXCEPT for the B'not-Mitzvah on June 10 and June 17, which are at 10:30

B'Nai Mitzvah's in June

6/10 - Tia Hurwitz

6/17 - Abigail Lewis

ANNUAL MEETING

JUNE 4 - Time to be announced. Check events for details.

Message from Bruce Leshine

Temple President

My Friends,

In September 1654, Jewish refugees from Brazil landed in the Dutch colonial port of New Amsterdam. Soon after their arrival, the settlers formed a congregation, the first steps in establishing a lasting Jewish community in their new home. Though their presence in the colony was resisted at first by the governing authorities, by the end of the century, this first Jewish settlement and congregation in North America became permanently established as a *kehillah kedosha*, a "holy community." This community would eventually become known as Congregation Shearith Israel, the first synagogue in the British colony of New York and in America.

Being a community, and not merely a place for religious worship, has long been the defining characteristic of the Jews. Indeed, our ancestors referred to their being Jewish as *Am Yisrael*, meaning "the people of Israel", rather than being of the religion of Israel. In prior letters to the Congregation, I have said that our Sinai community must make changes in order to extend the life of our Temple, and such changes will alter the programs and other aspects of what we have done at Sinai. Change may be difficult for our Congregation, but the Temple will ultimately benefit by evolving into a financially sustainable model.

Of course, change is not necessarily easy; it will require us to think broadly, and to open our minds, individually and collectively. But our growth, both internally and externally, relies in large part on our willingness to change. Our first step is separating the Jewish "way we live our lives" and "but that's the way we've always done it." The two are not the same. Once we do that, and we realize that it's alright—even beneficial—to explore and maybe modify the way we've always done it in order to improve and heighten the way we live our Jewish lives, change takes on a whole new look to it. Indeed, change creates Sinai Temple's "tomorrow."

Though Jewish communities have changed over time, membership in a Jewish community has always demanded a sense of shared destiny. Over the coming years, I look to the members of our Congregation to become more and more active in everything that happens here at Sinai Temple. And although we haven't faced quite the same challenges as Shearith Israel, we have done some "serious self-reflection" and some "hard thinking" over the last year about the future of our own community. Throughout this process, which has at times been difficult for many, I am thankful for the dedication and the passion of our entire Congregation; as well as for the respect and the love that has been demonstrated by all within our Sinai family. Our "path forward" is on a path that we all share—I am encouraged by what we have realized, and I am excited for our future...

Be well, *Bruce*

JUDAICA GIFT SHOP

Mother's Day is just about here and we offer lovely jewelry, silk scarves and a selection of gifts sure to please Mom.

We've returned to our regular hours of Tuesdays 2:30 to 4: PM and Sundays from 9:30 to noon.

Thais Fischel 786-9577

To Our Sinai Family:

We are delighted to invite you to join us in celebrating the *Aufruf* (wedding blessing) of our daughter, Erin Mernoff and her fiancé, Dave Hopkins, during Shabbat Services on Friday, June 2nd, at 6 PM.

-Karen and David Mernoff

Message from Heather Sullivan

Director of Education

Hello,

As our 5777 school year winds down, I want to take this opportunity to thank all of our hard working and dedicated teachers. They bring forth a love of our children and their Judaism each and every time they enter our Temple.

With the halting of the Solel merger, Sinai is looking to build a brighter future for our Sinai children. Our teachers are an integral part of taking this promising next step.

On May 14th, I hope you will take a moment to thank your child's teacher.

We will have our traditional last day of school BBQ, thanks to the MWOS. We realize that our last Sunday is Mother's Day but hope you will be able to share in a quick lunch and heartfelt thanks.

L'Shalom, Heather

NOTES FROM THE CANTOR

Please join us on Friday evening, May 5, for a special inter-generational celebration of Shabbat. We call it *Shabbat L'dor Vador* (from generation to generation). Here is how it will work. We will have our usual "pre-oneg" at 5:45 in the lobby. Then, at 6:00, our service will begin in the Oneg Shabbat Room. Our Tot Shabbat families AND adults without tots will worship together from 6:00 until 6:30. (Don't worry; there will be chairs for adults who prefer not to sit on the floor Tot Shabbat style!) Then, at 6:30, the tots and their parents will have their dinner in the Oneg Shabbat Room, while the grown-ups without tots will continue their service in the lobby with a more grown up liturgy, including a D'var Torah and the Mourner's Kaddish. The adults will finish at around 7:00, when we will make Kiddush and enjoy some oneg in the lobby. This service was very well received when we did it last year, and it was a wonderful way for different demographics of Sinai Temple to meet each other and to worship together!

In the category of "What Have I Gotten Myself into Now?" I received a phone call some weeks ago from a woman who is organizing a charity event at Saint Luke's Greek Orthodox Church in East Longmeadow. She raved about how much her congregation loved the shows at Sinai Temple, and how much they appreciated my performances at the SSO annual Holiday Extravaganza concert. She asked if I would please consider being one of the "local celebrities" at this event. I thought about it for a moment, and I told her, "Sure. Why not?" So, on Saturday evening, May 20, at 7:00 PM, you can come to St. Luke's and see Sinai Temple's own Cantor Levson participating in *Dancing with Heart*. (It's a *Dancing with the Stars* kind of event.) Because I am sure that when the name Cantor Martin Levson is mentioned, I'm sure that the first thing that comes to everyone's mind is: "He is such a fine dancer!" What kind of dance will I be performing? You will have to come and see, but I promise you, it will be amusing. My designated charity that evening is the American Civil Liberties Union, so all of your monetary "votes" will go to support an important organization. Please see me for tickets. I would love to see a group from Sinai Temple there to support me as I dance!

Ivdu et Hashem B'simcha! Serve the Holy One with Joy!

WE WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS WHO HAVE JOINED US SINCE:

2/3/17

Korbin Cherkas-Clark

Leigh Cherkas



NEW YORK CITY TRIP

Yes, we really *are* going to New York City after all! Accompanied by our rabbi, our postponed heritage tour of the Lower East Side will now depart on Sunday, **June 11, 2017**, and you don't want to miss this! We will visit **The Tenement Museum**, have a guided walking tour of the **Lower East Side**, enjoy a wonderful deli lunch at the famous **Katz's Deli**, and then visit a fascinating, historic **Lower East Side synagogue**. Our coach will leave the Temple at 6:30 AM and arrive back around 8:30 PM.

The cost is only \$99 for adults, \$89 for our under-18 crowd, and that includes the bus, admissions, and the tour. Lunch is separate, but we will order ahead.

Space is limited on our tour, so register soon either online or in the Temple office. Questions? Contact Carol Tivoli (cbt112@gmail.com) or Sarah Shtrax, (sshtrax@gmail.com), our tour organizers.

Rabbi message continued from page 1

A few years into that Sephardic rabbinate, I took the interim training course. I really took the course only to gain the skills the course was offering. But then, just to see what would happen and "for the fun of it," I applied to an interim pulpit position that turned up on our placement list. To my surprise, I was offered the pulpit and the opportunity that came with it to serve a new congregation. And there, shortly after my arrival, I discovered that this really was my new calling. Further, what I found myself now in really was what my rabbinate, and my being a student of Torah, was about. Most important, I found out that my rabbinate still was going to make a difference, partly for me, certainly, but more for the people I was now serving and for what I had entered the rabbinate for so many decades earlier.

So this, now my fiftieth year in the rabbinate, occurs during the blessed opportunity that is mine: to be here with you as your rabbi and as the rabbi of Sinai. And in it, as much as I am your teacher now, equally you are *my* teachers. And with you, and through you, and mostly *because* of you, I am still growing. And my rabbinate, and with it the opportunity to continue to serve the Jewish people and bring the holiness and joy of Torah to you, goes on. And so I say, could anything more than this have given such meaning to that moment of my being called to the Torah at the CCAR convention in Atlanta?

Rabbi Howard Kosovske

The Men and Women of Sinai (MWOS)

On April 28th, MWOS provided a dinner at 6:00 followed by an Erev Shabbat service honoring our Rabbi Emeritus Mark Dov Shapiro as a very deserving recipient of the Rabbi Herman Eliot Snyder Service Award. As I am writing this, reservations are still being accepted for the dinner through the Sinai Temple office or website. I hope that you had the opportunity to join us in honoring Mark for his leadership at Sinai Temple for 28 years as our Rabbi and for all his continuing years of service to our community. The service included a blessing for the honored recipients of the Snyder Award the past 23 years and a very intimate, special sermon by Rabbi Shapiro.

Unfortunately, we are not in a position to offer our Annual Evenings with the Rabbi and with the Cantor this year. As participation in MWOS activities is renewed, it is hoped that we will return to a more robust schedule of events; it is simply not possible with the current level of active support.

We will be providing our end of the Religious School year annual BBQ on Sunday, May 14th (starting about 11:15) with free hamburgers, Hebrew National hot dogs, potato chips, perhaps watermelon, and good company! I hope that you will be able to join us! A breakfast has been planned for May 21st to discuss the environment, climate change, and a Jewish perspective on the environment. Considering that this would be the third major event put on by MWOS in four weeks, it is possible that this will need to be postponed into next year.

Many thanks again to all who have joined the Men and Women of Sinai and to all who have pitched in to help us in any way. We would greatly appreciate your assistance in our continuing support of the Sinai community.

Jack Henrie, *President*



The CARTOON KRONICLES

For Your Consideration

Rabbi Mark Dov Shapiro

I'm back! Yes, I'm back in the Temple bulletin just to say that I actually never left.

True, I am "retired," but as I have discovered during these first months of being Rabbi Emeritus, that doesn't mean I've "retreated." I think it's best to say I've "refocused."

Without evening meetings and daytime appointments, I've been free to find time and focus for a number of activities that very much fill my days. I've been working on a book for Jewish pre-schoolers as well as a book for Middle School students. I've written a few short articles for the Republican and the Jewish Ledger. I've been an extremely frequent visitor to the Longmeadow Library. I've spoken at two synagogues in Connecticut. And I've also been tracking down the story of my paternal grandmother who acted in Montreal's Yiddish theater scene.

I've been involved with a program at the Hampden County Jail, Link to Libraries, and I've also started to become familiar with the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts. Lastly, there is my role at Springfield's Episcopal Cathedral where I am "rabbi in residence." That has meant a few Sunday morning sermons, teaching some classes, and a fascinating amount of learning and exploring about Christianity. And let me not forget - extra time for walking, spinning, and biking now that winter has passed.

I'm not "tired" in retirement. I'm energized and, by the way, I am still Jewish and a member of Sinai Temple.

In fact, speaking of Sinai, I am reminded that this message shouldn't only be about me. As I said at the Saturday evening party in my honor, the 28 years of my being rabbi at Sinai were not about me. They were and still are about you and me and the community we built.

It wasn't me on the bimah making Rosh Hashanah or me in front of a microphone on my own for Purim or teaching or celebrating a Bar Mitzvah. It was always us together marking the seasons and celebrating life's joys or mourning life's losses. It was us together laughing and dancing and creating our Jewish future.

That is how I still feel about you, me, and Sinai Temple. The congregation faces challenges. We all know that. But the congregation has history and traditions that are beautiful and strong. The congregation has me, but, more important, it has all of us. We together. We have come a long way and we have much more to anticipate and accomplish in the months and years ahead.

NEW FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Join us! You can help us find innovative, creative, and fun fundraising ideas. To join us, contact Buff Maniscalco at rmmaniscalco@tighebond.com, or call (413) 562-3633.

A NEW SINAI YAHRZEIT OBSERVANCE PRACTICE

Beginning May 1st, we shall observe and announce *yahrzeits* at Friday night and Saturday morning Shabbat services in accordance with a slightly modified schedule. Starting with the Shabbat of May 5-6, we shall congregationally mark *yahrzeits* in whatever particular week we are in instead of what we have done in the past. In other words, starting then we will be reciting each week names of our hallowed departed whose *yahrzeits* have fallen from the previous Sunday through the Shabbat we are celebrating.

All of this will be reflected, of course, in the *yahrzeit* notifications we send out. As always, they will inform you of the actual day for you to observe the *yahrzeit* of your loved one as well the Shabbat when it will be appropriate for you to recite Kaddish.

ADULT OPPORTUNITIES

SINAI READERS – BOOKS TO CONSIDER

WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, noon

We will discuss “*A Bintel Brief: Love and Longing in Old New York*” by Liana Finck, described as “a thrilling mash-up of Art Spiegelman’s deft emotionality, Roz Chast’s hilarious neuroses, and the magical spirit of Marc Chagall. “*A Bintel Brief*” is Liana Finck’s evocative, elegiac love letter to the turn-of-the-century Jewish immigrants who transformed New York City and America itself.”

Get in the mood for our June 11 trip to the Lower East Side!

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, noon,

We will discuss Mishka Ben-David’s new book, “*Final Stop Algiers*”. We all gave a thumb’s up to his book “*Forbidden Love in St. Petersburg*.”

SINAI SHAVUOT OBSERVANCES

We Jews observe three “Pilgrimage” festivals: Sukkot, Pesach, and Shavuot. Called in Hebrew the *r’galim*, the “foot holidays,” they were times when our ancestors were mandated to “appear before God.”

Here in Sinai Temple, we have celebrated two of them together with great excitement since Rabbi Kosovske came to us, Sukkot and Pesach. Soon we will celebrate the third, Shavuot.

The word, Shavuot, means “weeks.” The holiday is called Festival of Weeks because it falls exactly seven weeks after Pesach.

What is Shavuot about? In biblical times, it was a summer harvest festival. Also called *Chag Habikkurim*, or Festival of the First Fruits, in the antiquity it was the celebration of the harvest of winter wheat. In rabbinic times, it became known as *Z’man Matan Torateinu*, or the Time of the Giving of our Torah, so-called following the rabbinic belief that Shavuot was the day that the Torah was given at Sinai.

We observe Shavuot here Tuesday evening, May 30th, through Wednesday, May 31st. We have two exciting experiences planned for our celebration. The first is on **Tuesday, the 30th**, when we join together with our sister congregation, **Beth El, at 7:00 PM** for an exciting, shared evening **Shavuot program**. And then, the next morning, **Wednesday the 31st**, we gather **in our own sanctuary at 10:30 AM** for a **Shavuot morning service**. At that service, **yizkor** prayers will be recited, and a **dairy lunch** will follow for those who attend. (Dairy foods are the fare on Shavuot; make reservations for our lunch, please!)

We promise you that both parts of our observance will be inspirational!

JEWISH ALLIANCE FOR LAW AND SOCIAL ACTION

During this season of Passover please consider joining us in our new initiative to work for social justice. Freedom is not just something we should talk about once a year at our Passover tables, but rather throughout all of the seasons.

We are launching a Western Mass movement as members of the Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action (JALSA). JALSA has been functioning as a catalyst for *tikkun olam* for over 15 years in the Boston area. Together we can have strategic impact at the local, state and national levels on the issues we care about including fighting for a living wage, paid family leave, environmental justice, criminal justice reform, fair treatment of immigrants and ensuring there is no religious registry in MA. .

Please consider attending the Social Action Committee meetings to learn more about our plans or become an individual member of JALSA directly. The Western Mass arm of JALSA is planning to hire a part-time organizer to help us with our mission. Our goal is to raise \$15,000 and we already have commitments totaling \$11,500 through individual donations. If you are interested in contributing to this important effort, please send your donation to Ronnie Leavitt at 143 Twin Hills Road.

For further information, please contact Ronnie Leavitt (Ronnie.Leavitt@gmail.com) or Michele Marantz (mb.marantz@comcast.net).

Save The Date!

Congregation B'nai Israel, Northampton

Sunday May 21, 3:00 - 5:30 PM

THE SIX-DAY WAR-50 YEARS LATER: A Commemoration and Examination of the Landmark Event And Its Enduring Impact on Israel and America

The Six-Day War was a watershed event that shaped not only Israeli and Palestinian realities, but also defined the relationship between American Jews and the State of Israel. Join us for an opportunity to discuss the 50th anniversary of this war and to learn about some of the many changes it brought about.

- How did the immediate outcomes of the War impact Israel, and how do the consequences explain the situation there today?
- What changes did the War bring to the Jewish community in the US, and how did they influence the relationship between American Jewry and Israel?
- What can we learn from the past 50 years; what are the risks and opportunities we face; and how can we resolve the subsequent conflicts within our community?

With Panelists:

- **Donna Robinson Divine**- *Morningstar Family Professor of Jewish Studies and Professor of Government at Smith College, Emerita. Author of Exiled in the Homeland: Zionism and the Return to Mandate Palestine, a study of the experience of Jewish immigration to Palestine during the early years of the British Mandate*
- **Bethamie Horowitz**- *Research Assistant Professor of Jewish Education at NYU departments of Applied Statistics, Social Science, and Humanities. Wrote the monthly "Trend Spotting" column in The Forward about emerging sociological developments relevant to the Jewish community, and served as Director of Planning and Research at UJA-Federation of New York, where she conducted the Connections and Journeys study of identity and Jewishness in the lives of younger American Jewish adults.*
- **Lara Friedman**- *Newly named President of The Foundation for Middle East Peace. A former Foreign Service Officer, she was previously Director of Policy and Government Relations for Americans for Peace Now. A notable authority on the Middle East and Israeli policies in the West Bank, she regularly publishes opinion and analysis pieces in both the US and Israeli press.*

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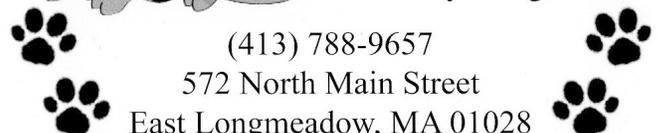
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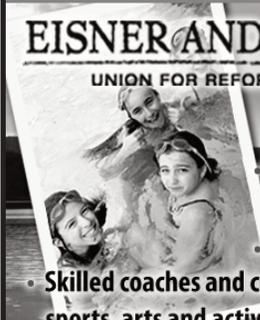
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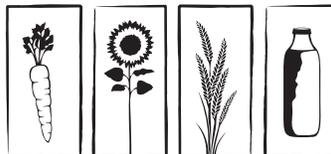
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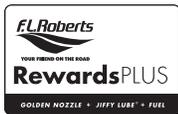
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