



Sha'arei Shalom

Monthly Newsletter

June 27, 2013

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Upcoming Events

- SHABBAT CIRCLE POTLUCK DINNER– July 26th @ 6:30 p.m. at the home of Alan and Rachel Lovitz
- SHABBAT SERVICE August 23rd @ 7:30 p.m.

All Congregation Services take place at the Ashland Community Center, 162 West Union Street (unless otherwise noted).

- Evergreen – July 9th @ 7:30 p.m.
- Book Group – July 21st @ 10:00 a.m.

DUES REMINDER

For those members who split their annual dues into two payments, please remember that the second payment was due by June 30th.

You can contact Mindy at treasurer@shaareishalom.org if you are unsure of your balance.

Rabbi's Letter

by Margie Klein

Dear friends,

Thank you so much again for an inspiring Sheva Brachot wedding celebration dinner. It meant so much to Jeremy and me to share this time in our lives with all of you.

In this past week's Torah portion, King Balak hires a prophet named Bilaam to go curse the Israelites. After a series of amazing adventures, Bilaam winds up *blessing* the Israelites with the words "Ma Tovu," that we sing together in synagogue.

At a key moment in the story, Bilaam rides his donkey from Balak's kingdom to the Israelites' encampment to go curse them, but then the donkey stops, because she sees an angel telling them not to proceed. Not realizing the presence of the angel, Bilaam starts beating the donkey with a stick, urging her to move forward. Miraculously, at this moment, the donkey receives the gift, and tells him to stop beating her. "What have I done to you," she says, "that you should treat me this way?" Only then are Bilaam's eyes opened, and he is able to see the angel that the donkey has seen all along.

It is easy to criticize Bilaam for being foolish and cruel, but this past weekend, my friend Lee Moore asked a group of friends to imagine all the characters in the story - Bilaam, the donkey, and the angel - as parts of ourselves. We each contain the wise angel, who knows what is right. We each contain the ability to see what is really going on, like the donkey. And, we each contain a purpose-driven Bilaam, who guides us to achieve our goals, but sometimes misses what is really going on.

Though I wish I could say that I identify only with the innocent donkey and wise angel in the story, I realize that I recognize some of Bilaam's behavior in myself. Just a couple of weeks ago, I crafted a scheme to create an elaborate "place card tree" for our wedding, with place cards hanging from the branches. Despite the fairly obvious barriers - we had the wrong sized tree, no space to put it, and no time to deal with this project, I blazed forward, ordering ribbons and paper clips and organizing people to make the final product. Like Bilaam, I was so fixated on my mission that I could not see what was right in front of me.

Further, when my mom and Jeremy pointed out that this wasn't really the priority, rather than thanking them for the wisdom, I told them that they didn't *get* my creative vision. I even resented them a bit for trying to stop me, even though I really knew that they just wanted to help me preserve my sanity. Like Bilaam, instead of listening to the wise voices close to me, I threw them under the proverbial bus. Indeed, unlike Bilaam, I did not beat my loved ones or speak unkindly to them, but I certainly did my best to goad them on against their will. And, eventually, I backed down, and everything was fine.

Reflecting on this story, I wish that I could have kept focus on my goal (welcoming our guests through personal and artistic place cards), but also been more like the donkey - aware of what is going on on a practical level, flexible to new wisdom. And I wish I could have been like the angel, able to have perspective and understand what is really important.

This month, I invite you to reflect on a time when you were very focused on a not-totally-attainable goal, when that focus led to a lack of awareness and/or to mistreatment of those you love. If you had to do it again, how might you cultivate an awareness of what is really going on, so as to stay focused on goals but also be observant and flexible? How can you stay kind to the people you care about most, even when their questions and challenges are hard to hear?

I bless us that we may see the angels guiding us through life, know our loved ones as the allies they are, and like Bilaam, may all our attempts at cursing others turn to blessings.

Rabbi Margie

We are currently enrolling for the 2013-14 school year. If you are a current family and have not yet sent in your forms and deposit, please do so now.

[2013-2014 School Registration Form](#)

If you are a prospective family and would like to learn more about our school, please contact Lisa Clay at school@shaareishalom.org.

President's Corner **by Jane Greenstein**

Last night Sha'arei Shalom hosted a Post-Wedding Picnic Dinner to celebrate Rabbi Margie marriage to Jeremy Ronkin. This dinner was part of the Jewish tradition of friends and family hosting dinners in the week following the wedding where the bride and groom are feted and the 7 wedding blessings (Sheva Brachot) are recited. It was a wonderful evening for our community to come together, not only to celebrate this wonderful life event, but also to experience how tradition and community can enrich our lives.



This joyous fun-filled evening wouldn't have been possible without the time and dedication of the following members:

- Sheila Watnick and Barbara Kleinberg who were our party-planners extraordinaire.
- Jeff Weinstein, Alyssa Dver, and Ari Kaufman (our in-house band!) who wrote and performed a beautiful song for Rabbi Margie and Jeremy.
- Ari Kaufman who learned and chanted the Sheva Brachot.
- Sharon Prybyla who did a major part of set-up and break-down.
- Lucy Tannen for leading us in the horah.
- Margot Podtburg for bringing the scrapbook that allowed us all to write our good wishes and hearty congratulations for the Rabbi and Jeremy to keep as a memento.

Thank you for your contributions! And thank you to all our members who attended and provided food and decorations to help make the Community Center a warm and inviting setting for our indoor picnic.

I share with you here the toast I offered last night:

What a beautiful evening for a family picnic. It may be gray and overcast outside, but the sun is shining here inside the Community Center for our celebration of Rabbi Margie and Jeremy's marriage.

Rabbi, Jeremy, I hope that all of your days will be like today—filled with the warmth and joy of friendship and community. Sometimes it will be easy to find that warmth, like today, when there are is a special event to celebrate with those who care about you. Some days will be more ordinary, but will still be filled with contentment and ease. But sometimes, there are storms. Such dark times are inevitable in life. Sometimes you can see the storm coming, and can build up the fire and huddle inside to wait it out with friends and family. In this way, you can find warmth in the face of the storm. But sometimes the blizzard strikes out of nowhere and you are unprepared. Sometimes the storm stops you in your path and you find yourself stuck moving toward your destination. At those inevitable times, remember the lesson you learned on Mt. Wachusset. Remember to lean on each other and care for each other. Remember to be patient with each other. Remember to help each other to get back on the road. If you hold you caring, love, and respect for each other at the core of your lives together, you will always find your way out of the storm and back to sunshine.

Even in hard times, remember that surrounding the two of you is a circle of family and friends who love, admire, and support you. Know that Sha'arei Shalom is part of that circle--that we are part of your family and you are part of ours. We are blessed to have you as our rabbi and are so happy that Jeremy comes as part of that "package."

Please raise your glasses and join in me in toasting Margie and Jeremy--To a long, happy, sun-filled life together surrounded by family and friends. May your years together be filled with many picnics and happy occasions!

If you would like to donate a siddur in honor of/in memory of someone or in celebration of an event, please contact Jane Greenstein at president@shaareishalom.org. The cost is \$36 per Siddur.

Upcoming Services

Our July gathering will be a **Shabbat Circle on Friday, July 26th at 6:30 p.m.** at Alan and Rachel Lovitz's home. Shabbat Circle is a time for families to celebrate Shabbat together over a potluck dinner at a member's home Please contact Alan or Rachel at lovitza58@gmail.com or rblowitz@verizon.net if you are interested in attending and to let them know what your food contribution will be.

There will not be a traditional Shabbat evening service in July. **The next such service will be on August 23rd at 7:30 p.m.** at the Ashland Community Center.

Healing Prayers

We wish a full and speedy recovery to Judy Ernest, who is healing after an injury.

We send prayers for continuing healing to member Judy and Martin Shapiro, who are both recovering from lengthy illnesses. Cards and good wishes can be sent to her at home: 659 Main Street, Ashland MA 01721.

We also send healing prayers to former member and board member, Elissa Naiman, who is continuing to undergo treatment for lung cancer. Those who would like to reach out to her can mail her at 16 Indian Spring Road, Ashland 01721 or email her at elissa.naiman@verizon.net.

Religious School Update

by Lisa Clay

We are now registering students for the 2013-14 School year. We request registration forms and deposits by June 1st in order to help us plan for next year.

[Click Here for 2013-14 School Registration Form](#)

Monica Weinstein Women's Book Group

by Cindi Muller

Our amazing book club continues to meet monthly building friendships and connections between the women in our congregation as discuss our monthly books & share our lives. Our next meeting is July 21st at 10am at Bodacious Bagels in Ashland. Please join us as we discuss "State of Wonder" by Ann Patchett. Any questions please contact Cindi Muller at cindimuller@hotmail.com

Evergreen

by Sheila Watnick

The next meeting of Evergreen will be on **Tuesday, July 9th, at 7:30 p.m.** at the home of Sheila Watnick. Female temple members 60 and older are welcome. Contact evergreen@shaareishalom.org.

Comfort and Caring Shawls

by Margot Podtburg

The Helping Hands Committee would like to introduce a new way that we can help one another during times of serious illness and challenges. A Comfort and Caring Shawl can be a thin scarf, a shrug, a wide shawl or a lap blanket. What makes it a comfort and sharing shawl is the intentions of the creator. Shawls are made with love and care by a volunteer within our Sha'arei Shalom community for someone within our community. They represent prayers for the recipient's health, joy and peace as well as hopes for comfort for the recipient. The shawls would be delivered to recipients either by the Rabbi or by someone with Helping Hands accompanied by a note explaining the shawl.

If you knit or crochet, you can help by making a shawl. If you are unable to make a shawl, you can still help by providing a gift card so that those of us who can so that we may purchase yarn to create a shawl. Our hope is to have several shawls on hand in case of an immediate need, and then to replenish the shawls as they are distributed. We also have a newly created knitting circle (see below) who can help you learn to knit/crochet and can help you make a shawl for someone you know. If you would like help making a shawl or would like to donate a gift card for supplies, please contact Margot Podtburg at mpodtburg@hotmail.com.

Mahjong Anyone?

Jenine Pollack is looking to form a mahjong group. If you know how to play, or are interested in learning, please email her at jeninepollack@hotmail.com

Babysitting!

We have two young ladies in the congregation who wanted our membership to know they are available for babysitting. They are Etana Handelman and Lexi Maher. Here are their introductions:

Hi, my name is Etana Handelman. I am looking for opportunities to babysit. I have a unique background as I am the big sister of four little sisters and a brother. As a result I have experience with children of all ages including babies and toddlers. I also successfully graduated from the Babysitting training at Ashland Recreation Center which included CPR and first aid. I am free to babysit Tuesdays, Fridays, Sundays, and most Saturdays. If you are interested in my babysitting services please call [508-881-7188](tel:508-881-7188). Thank you, Etana

My name is Lexi Maher. I live on Pennock road and I love children. I am 12 years old and have taken the Red Cross babysitting course. I can babysit on weekends and various weekday nights. Contact me with any questions at:

508-231-0883 or 774-279-6647
leximaher@hotmail.com

American Red Cross Babysitter Training Class

To provide youth who are planning to babysit with the knowledge and skills necessary to safely and responsibly give care for children and infants. This training will help participants to develop leadership skills; learn how to develop a babysitting business, keep themselves and others safe and help children behave; and learn about basic child care and basic first aid. The recommended age for this course is 11-15 years old.

Please contact Michelle Levenson for more information (617-529-0429, mllevenson@verizon.net)



Are you an alumnus of CYJ in Amherst, NH (03031)?
Our newly formed Alumni Association is looking for you.

Please send a quick e-mail to alumni@campyoungjudaea.com with your name and the years you were at CYJ.

We are looking forward to re-connecting!



Prozdor of Hebrew College has a long and storied history. Dating back to the late 1920s, Prozdor's rich tradition of excellence in Judaic and Hebrew studies continues well into the 21st century. While the four-day-a-week model of after-school Jewish education is a thing of the past, Prozdor remains the central address for teen learning and engagement in the Jewish community of Boston and southern New England. Prozdor's vision of excellence in teaching, a rigorous text-based curriculum, a wide menu of informal education experiences, and committed and energized students who own their Jewish education remain central to our mission. As Prozdor enters its ninth decade, we continue to refine and update our programs, curriculum and technology-based teaching methods to serve our students and the Jewish community in the most meaningful and compelling way. Whether you are a student, parent, educator, donor or graduate, welcome to Prozdor!

Dan Brosgol, MEd'04
Director

<http://www.hebrewcollege.edu/prozdor-forms-and-important-information>

- 2013-14 Prozdor calendar
- Flyer for the Grades 8/9 Shabbaton in October
- Registration form for the Grades 8/9 Shabbaton
- Counselor application for the Grades 8/9 Shabbaton (for 11th and 12th graders)
- Flyer for AIPAC teen leadership summit,
- Form for December 9th grade Israel trip
- Form for 10th grade hosting of Israelis from Reali
- Flyer for August new student orientation
- Branch dinner registration form (Tuesday and Wednesday)
- Havayah Fellowship Information

DO YOU LOVE TO SING?

CHECK OUT SHIR JOY!

Whether you sing professionally or have only sung in your shower, this is your chance to join with other adults who love to sing Jewish music. Shir Joy is a Jewish choir that started up in the fall of 2011. We practice on Sunday evenings from 7-9 pm right at Congregation B'nai Shalom in Westborough. In our first year we had over 35 members from 14 central MA towns & cities. Rehearsals this coming year will begin on October 14 following the High Holidays. Choir participants are not required to be Jewish nor do members need to be affiliated with a Jewish organization to join. We hold several concerts over the year in the Central MA area.

Shir Joy will be directed again this coming year by Jonathan Rappaport, an experience choral conductor with over forty years of experience. Dues of \$75 per year. love of Jewish music, and ability to keep in tune with your neighboring singers are required. Although we do make beautiful music together, we also build strong community bonds. We welcome new members. If you are interested in participating or want additional information, check out our website www.shirjoychorus.com, or email ShirJoyMA@gmail.com. Shir Joy is partially funded from a generous grant from Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts.

WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG FAMILIES

PJ LIBRARY IS A JEWISH FAMILY ENGAGEMENT program implemented on a local level throughout North America. We mail free, high-quality [Jewish children's literature and music](#) to families across the continent on a monthly basis.

PJ Library is a program of the [Harold Grinspoon Foundation](#), made possible through partnerships with philanthropists and local Jewish organizations. Today, families in hundreds of communities across the United States and Canada are able to explore the timeless core values of Judaism through books and music.

All families raising Jewish children from age six months of age through five, six, seven or eight years (depending on the community) are [welcome to enroll](#).

<http://pjlibrary.org/>

добро пожаловать!

Engaging Metrowest Russian Jewish Families in Jewish Community Life

A grant from the Genesis Fund is enabling us to reach out to Russian Jewish families throughout Metrowest. By developing collaborative relationships, we are identifying and connecting with members of this large and vibrant community through engaging programming and activities.

As part of this program, JFN is also doing special **"Privet Malish"** visits -- **Welcome Baby!** visits with gift baskets and resources tailored for Russian Jewish families.

If you are interested in learning more about our programs or "Privet Malish," or if you know someone who is, please contact our Russian community connector, [Luba Olshan](#), for more information.