



BETH EL NEWSLETTER

The Heights Synagogue

October 2004

תשרי \ חשוון 5765



Rabbi Moshe Adler

Notes from the Rebbe...

Trial Balloons

“Throughout history it has been the inaction of those who could have acted, the indifference of those who should have known better, the silence of the voice of justice when it mattered most, that has made it possible for evil to triumph.”

-Haile Selassie

A few years ago, during a visit to Israel, I read a newspaper article that began, “The day may not yet have come when an English child sits down at the breakfast table and cheerily asks, ‘Is it all right to be anti-Semitic now?’ But that day is not far off.” The writer was referring to a growing tendency of the British media to justify Israel-bashing while justifying the increasing acts of terrorism against Israel. At the same time, anti-Semitic remarks were once again becoming acceptable in polite British conversation.

In a free and democratic society, anti-Semitism (at least the open variety) is not respectable. People don’t usually want to think of themselves as bigots. In such a society, anti-Semites send up trial balloons to see if it’s safe to launch a full-scale campaign, and if those trial balloons meet no serious resistance, they move ahead with their campaign. The British media’s savaging of Israel and the “gentlemanly” anti-Semitic banter in England that year were such trial balloons, as were the bumper stickers with “Oil, not Jews” that one saw in this country during the Gulf War.

More recently in this country, the term “Neocons”— which just happens to refer to Jews in key positions within the US Defense establishment – has come to be bandied about in certain media quarters when people are looking for someone to blame for the morass in Iraq. The word is that the Neocons (wink-wink, nudge-

nudge) got the US to invade Iraq in order to rid Israel of the threat posed by Saddam Hussein. (Why these alleged cat’s-paws for Israel would want to get the US into a war with Iraq when Israel itself considers Iran a far more dangerous enemy is never made clear.)

This past Israel Independence Day, Tavis Smiley, the NPR talk-show host, devoted an entire program not to his usual insightful coverage of African-American issues, but to “Israel on its birthday.” His guests were an anti-Israel Arab-American professor and a fawning Jewish student who deferred to the professor’s every assertion as though it were Torah from Sinai – hardly a balanced panel. (Perhaps Mr. Smiley figured that his excellent program on the music of Ugandan Jews gave him license to question the right of the Jews to a nation of their own.)

Our challenge is to keep our sights focused, shoot down trial balloons whenever they are sent up, and yet not allow ourselves to become paranoid such that we keep looking under the bed for anti-Semites. We are Jewish citizens of the world. We will not accept a choice between our Jewishness and our world citizenship

The prophets teach us that anti-Semitism, along with other forms of bigotry, will one day be a dead relic of humankind’s long and destructive adolescence. We pray unceasingly for that day.

But we dare not hold our breath.



President's Perspectives...

Learning and Growing Together

Shortly after the school year began, Elana Berusch proudly told me that she was now in middle school. Elana walked with us in 1998 when we marched our Sifrei Torah from Temple Beth El on Chagrin Boulevard to our temporary home in the Mayfield JCC. At the time, Elana was learning to read. How much she and our other children have learned and grown since then! Our congregation has learned and grown, too.

We learned gradually during the years we rented space at the JCC. The learning curve became steeper and bumpier after we bought our new home last year. Our first big project was preparing to move in. Dozens of members and friends volunteered hundreds of hours physically cleaning each room and correcting building code violations. Crews rearranged the seating in the sanctuary and scrubbed the kitchen. We also got to work raising funds for essential repairs, and renovations. More than 100 members and friends responded generously.

If you've ever done a home improvement project, you know that there are myriad details, and that things don't always go as planned. Our Facilities Team, headed by Vice President Laura Gooch, Russell Berusch, and Ed Small, has done a remarkable job managing every aspect of our new main entrance project. Russell and Ed have shared their expertise in property development, and have called in favors from their professional colleagues. Laura has worked closely with our architect and general contractor, and has been on site practically every day to monitor construction.

Soon after Laura and I became officers, we agreed it would be best for her to take responsibility for building-related matters, and for me to take responsibility for everything else. I got the better end of the deal! Laura and Ditte Wolin, chair of the House and Operations Committee, handle maintenance and repairs from our building's roof to its foundation and the surrounding grounds. When water from heavy spring rains spread across the floor of the social hall, Laura and Ditte mopped it up.

Although we had hoped our new main entrance would be ready for the High Holy Days, we encountered a series of construction delays. As I write this column, we are waiting for a new shipment of bricks for the facade. The first shipment did not meet our architect's exacting specifications.

Soon, we will enter our home through our new front doors, and go up to the sanctuary or down to the social hall by stairs or Shabbat-compliant elevator. In the lobby, a plaque will honor those who contributed to our Capital Campaign.

If you are among the members and friends who have contributed, you will soon receive a letter asking you to confirm how you wish to be listed. If you have not yet contributed to our Capital Campaign, you have until October 15 to send your donation in order to be among the donors honored on the plaque.

Imagine how our grandchildren will feel when they learn to read, and see our names among those who contributed to the building of **Beth El - The Heights Synagogue!**

**QUESTIONS?
CONCERNS?
COMMENTS?
COMPLAINTS?**

As always, please do not hesitate to contact your President by e-mail jack@valancy.com or home telephone (216) 371-1439

HELP US

STAY IN TOUCH!

Please be sure we have your current contact information: phone number and home and e-mail addresses. Send changes to Blanche Valancy, blanche@valancy.com or call her at (216) 371-1439

E-Mail Newsletter

If you'd like to get the pdf e-mail version, contact benews@apk.net (You must have the free Acrobat Reader in order to open the attachment.)

Beth El – The Heights Synagogue Newsletter, Vol. 7 No. 2, October 2004

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General submittal deadline is the 8th of each month.

Published 10 times per year.

For address or mailing list change, call 216-320-9667

NEWS FROM BETH EL

חדשות

Mazel Tov!

Jeffrey Halpern and Abigail Lee, who recently became engaged. Jeff says that he also has purchased a home near Blanche and Staunton. We welcome Jeffrey as a new member, as well.

Thanks for Contributions: תודה!

In memory of Laille Gabinet:

Debra and Richard Berger
Frank and Jeanette Buchwald
William Jones and Linda Shoenberg
Lois Luntz

To the General Fund:

Drs. Alan Angell and Beth Dollinger
Lissa Keller
Natalie L. Klein

Thanks for Kiddush Sponsorships: תודה!

September 4, Rabbi Moshe and Nili Adler, in celebration of their anniversary.

October 16, Marvin and Miriam Palevsky in honor of their daughter Jessica, who will become Bat Mitzvah that morning.

מזל טוב!

Yasher Koach to:

Bill Bruml was recently awarded the degree of Master of Education with a specialty in secondary mathematics from John Carroll University.

Dr, Michael and Shelly Costa Bloomfield shared some news of their three daughters' recent activities:

Eliza Bloomfield graduated from Chagrin Falls High School in June and is now headed off to Ohio State, where she plans to study nursing.

Jessica Bloomfield completed her first year toward her doctorate in clinical psychology at the University of Denver.

Rebecca Bloomfield graduated from Queen's University in Canada with a B.A. in Third World Development and is presently traveling in Europe

יישר כוח!

Best of luck to Ruth Link-Gelles, who is spending a semester abroad in Spain.

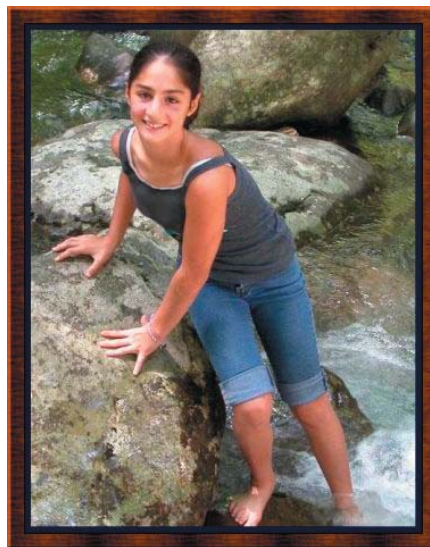
Jessica Palevsky

Will Become Bat Mitzvah

Jessica is 12 years old and the third of six children. Both of her older sisters, Nicole and Marissa, had their B'nai Mitzvot at Beth El. Jessica attends Memorial Junior High and is in the seventh grade. Jessica loves to go horseback riding and has attended horse camp for the last two years. Jessica has also been a cheerleader, and loves sports and art.

Jessica has a huge heart and is great with small children and animals. She loves to help her younger brother and care for the family's pets.

Jessica will become Bat Mitzvah on October 16. Her parents, Marvin and Miriam Palevsky, will sponsor kiddush that Shabbat, in her honor.



E-mail notices of upcoming programs and other news at Beth El – The Heights Synagogue are ONLY broadcast via our BigList electronic mailing list.

To subscribe, please send an e-mail to:

bethel-sub@valancy.biglist.com

You will then need to confirm your subscription by responding to the automated message you receive a few minutes later.

CALENDAR, OCTOBER 2004

תשרי \ חשוון 5765

Tuesday,
October 5th:
Eat dinner in
the Beth El
sukka!

Please join us
for pizza
and salad in
the sukka
at 6:45 PM.

In order to have
enough food,
reservations
must be made by
Sunday,
October 3rd to
Lisa Lefstein
Berusch
at 397-9060 or
iberusch@core.com.

Cost is
\$7 per adult,
\$5 per child.
Event will take
place rain or
shine.

Sunday, September 26, 1:00 PM – Help Build the Congregational Sukka
(*details on page 6*)

Wednesday, September 29 – Erev Sukkot

Thursday, September 30, 9:15 AM – סוכות – First Day of Sukkot

Friday, October 1, 9:15 AM – סוכות – Second Day of Sukkot

Sunday, October 3, 2:00 to 5:00 PM – Annual Sukka Hop

(*details on page 6*)

Tuesday, October 5, 6:45 PM – Dinner in the shul sukka. Reservations are mandatory and must be made by October 3. See panel at the right for details.

Wednesday, October 6, 6:30 AM – הושענא רבה – Hoshana Rabbah
shaharit services

Thursday, October 7, 9:15 AM – שמיני עצרת – Sh'mini Atzeret services
(Yizkor mid-morning)

7:45 PM – Evening service and Simhat Torah hakafot

Friday, October 8, 9:15 AM – שמחת תורה – Simhat Torah services and
hakafot

Saturday, October 9, after services – Kiddush with Rashi: “Wonder What Rashi Made of Bereshit?” Cheryl Birkner Mack will lead an exploration of the parsha of the week.

Saturday, October 16 – Jessica Palevsky will become Bat Mitzvah. Kiddush will be sponsored by her parents, Marvin and Miriam, in her honor.

Sunday, October 17, 7:00 PM – The Short Stories by Jewish Authors Discussion Group will meet at the home of Harvey and Sondra Jacobs to discuss short stories by Cynthia Ozick. (*details on page 3*)

Saturday, October 23, after services – Lunch and Learn, lead by Harold Tickin: “The Essence of Jewish Humor.” An entertaining presentation ranging from personal experiences (true stories better than jokes) to a hilarious reading from college Yiddish.

Sunday, October 31, 7:00 PM – The Short Stories by Jewish Authors Discussion Group will meet at the home of Harvey and Sondra Jacobs to discuss short stories by Bernard Malamud. (*details on page 3*)

Friday, November 5 at 6:00 PM – We will welcome Shabbat together with a kabbalat Shabbat service, followed by a community Shabbat dinner, singing, and dancing. Please save the date!

Saturday, November 6, 10:15 AM – Learners' Service in the Library

Sunday, November 14, 7:00 PM – The Short Stories by Jewish Authors Discussion Group will meet at the home of Harvey and Sondra Jacobs to discuss short stories by Grace Paley. (*details on page 3*)

HOLIDAY DETAILS

Sukka Construction

Please come and help build our shul sukka on Sunday, September 26th at 1:00 PM.

Marvin Palevsky, our sukka maven, has all the tools and materials, but could use some helping hands. Bring children, friends, and creativity; we need to decorate as well.

Once it is built, the sukka is available throughout Sukkot. If you are interested in reserving some time for your family and friends to bring your own meal to eat in the Beth El sukka, call Lisa at (216) 397-9060.

Hop With Us to the 6th Annual Beth El Sukka Hop

This year, the sukka hop is an all-Shaker Heights extravaganza! It will be held on Sunday, October 3, 2004 as follows:

2-3 PM at the home of Mark and Adina Davidson, 3681 Winchell Road, Shaker Hts., inaugurating the first sukka at their new home!

3-4 PM at the home of Marty and Laura Rabinowitz, 18708 Lomond Blvd., Shaker Hts.

4-5 PM at the home of Marvin and Ieda Warshay, 3652 Latimore Road, Shaker Hts.

Shake the lulav, smell the etrog! Bring the kids for one of Beth El's most fun yearly events!



Have you seen ... Beth El -- The Heights Synagogue's prominent mention in the new revised edition of *Merging Traditions – Jewish Life in Cleveland*, by Judah Rubinstein with Jane Avner? Our 1998 Torah march is pictured (p. 197) and the text (p. 188) briefly describes how our congregation has carried out its commitment to the Heights area by locating here. The history of our predecessor, Congregation Beth El, is mentioned at various points as well. Jane Avner, co-author of the book with the late Judah Rubenstein, is a good friend of the congregation's. The book may be purchased at Jacobs Judaica, Franks Hebrew Books and elsewhere.

Simḥat Torah יום כפור

Join us on the evening of Thursday, October 7, at 7:45 PM for a joyous celebration as we dance around the sanctuary with the Torahs. Schnapps and schnacks will be served.

On the morning of Friday, October 8, we will continue the celebration with more song and dance. We will finish the yearly cycle of Torah reading and immediately begin again. It is traditional to honor every member of the congregation, including the children, with an aliya on Simḥat Torah. We will also honor two respected members of the congregation with the last aliya of the Torah, Hatan/Kallat Torah, and the very first aliya of the Torah, Kallat/Hatan Bereshit.



Todah Rabah To Our Mailing Committee

The newsletter mailing committee, headed by Blanche Valancy, regularly puts in hours, behind the scenes, to get your newsletters and other important mail to you in a timely fashion. Let's give thanks to Blanche and to those who have helped to collate, stuff and sort over the past months: Bill and Carol Bruml, Connie Friedman, Fern Grunberger, Celia, Allie and Emily Jennings, Merry Lugasy, Marilyn Malkin, Honey Massey, Lise Moulton, Laura Rabinowitz, Nina Sobel, Beth and Scott Wachter, Ieda Warshay, and Marsha Weisberg.

Sound like fun? We think of it as our version of a "quilting bee"!! Let Blanche know if you'd like to volunteer at 216-371-1439 or blanche@valancy.com. We would love to have you join the group!

Adult Education



**Welcome
Shabbat
with Beth El**

**Friday evening,
November 5
at 6:00 PM,
we will
welcome Shabbat
together.**

**Plan to join us
for a
kabbalat Shabbat
service,
followed by
a community
Shabbat
dinner, singing,
and dancing.**

**Please save the
date!**

Short Stories by Jewish Authors Mini Series

The following authors, stories and dates have been selected for the “Short Stories by Jewish Authors” Adult Education fall mini series. Thanks to all who participated in a productive planning meeting! Joy Collas, an experienced teacher of writing and poetry, has graciously agreed to lead our discussions.

Sunday, October 17, 7:00 PM

Stories by Cynthia Ozick:

The Pagan Rabbi
The Dock-Witch
The Shawl
Rosa

Sunday, October 31, 7:00 PM

Stories by Bernard Malamud:

The Last Mohican
The Magic Barrel
The Jewbird
Angel Levine

Sunday November 14, 7:00 PM

Stories by Grace Paley

(Titles to be announced)

The expectation is that you will have read the stories prior to each session and will come prepared to discuss them. If you need copies of some or all of the stories, please contact Sondra Jacobs, (216) 397-1481 (hajacobs@juno.com), as soon as possible, and before October 1.

All of the sessions will take place at the home of Harvey and Sondra Jacobs, 1481 Blackmore, Cleveland Heights.

Kiddush with Rashi Returns

Join us on October 9 after services for Kiddush with Rashi. Wonder what Rashi made of Bereshit? Come and discover Rashi’s juicy insights with Cheryl Birkner Mack, Middle School Judaics Teacher at Gross Schechter Day School. Satisfy your appetite, both of mind and body, during an engaging exploration while you also enjoy kiddush. This is the first in a monthly series on the famous Medieval commentator’s insights into the parsha of the week.

Lunch and Learn

On Saturday, October 23, after services, we will have our first Lunch and Learn of the season. Harold Ticktin will discuss “**The Essence of Jewish Humor.**” Harold plans an entertaining presentation ranging from personal experiences (true stories better than jokes) to a hilarious reading from college Yiddish.

Learners’ Services Resume

The first Learners’ Service of the fall season will be on November 6. You don’t have to be a beginner; you just have to be interested in learning more about davening. Explore the language, meaning, history and structure of the service in this spirited small group setting. Begins at about 10:15 and re-joins the main service for the D’var Torah, Musaf and Kiddush. The Learners’ Service meets in the library off the balcony on the 2nd and 3rd Shabbat mornings each month through December and then on the 1st and 3rd Shabbat mornings through May. For more information contact Mia Buchwald Gelles at (216) 321-6734.





What's Going On?

BETH EL

The Heights Synagogue

Issue 14, October 2004



The block walls looked like this in late August. By the time this newsletter is out, the brick should be up and the scaffolding down.

Three Walls and a Roof

All the walls of the elevator addition are in place, the roof is on, and the brick is on site. With a little cooperation from the weather, the brick should be up and the scaffolding down by the time this newsletter hits the streets. Work on the windows and the interior finishes will then begin, together with the work to install the elevator, which should arrive sometime in mid-September. The elevator's supplier is late shipping the unit, which has pushed our completion date a bit further back and into October.

You've probably noticed that the back wall of the Social Hall has been screened off with plastic while the workman cut doors for our new stairs and elevator. The doors are on site and should be installed soon, and the wall will then be repaired.

Fixing Up

Work to repair the older parts of the building and correct violations continues, with tuck-pointing and other brick repairs nearly complete. New doors will soon replace those at the Desota entrance (our current "Main Entrance") and at the Berkeley entrance to the Sanctuary and Social Hall.

The Inside Job

Work has just begun to spruce up the sanctuary with new wall paper, plaster repair, and paint. Some of the other work in the sanctuary (hanging curtains and putting our memorial plaques on the walls) will take a little longer to complete than we had hoped, but work continues to progress.

Troy from VIP Restoration works on the tuckpointing.

