



# BETH EL NEWSLETTER

The Heights Synagogue

December 2004

5765 כסלו טבת



*Rabbi Moshe Adler*

## Will You Respect Them in the Morning?

Whether one voted Republican or Democratic in the presidential election, there is reason to be concerned about the new term. There always is. Yet, in the wake of this particular election, several questions arise whose answers will bear on the lives of us all:

- Will the Christian right, so influential in President Bush's victory, press its agenda with greater urgency than ever, confident that it can finally turn America into a theocracy?
- Will President Bush succeed in packing the Supreme Court with ultra-conservative justices who interpret away certain rights granted by more-moderate courts (for we all know that a liberal constructionist is "activist," while a strict constructionist is "responsible")?
- Will a Congress heavily influenced by ideology-driven legislators force through constitutional amendments that will set civil rights back fifty years?
- Will carte blanche be given to drug companies to keep needed medications out of the hands of all but wealthy people, and to insurers to replace physicians in deciding what patients need?
- Will the Bush administration, no longer in need of Jewish votes, begin to pressure

Israel to make bigger and bigger concessions, especially with Arafat out of the way?

- Will G-d grant new "revelations" to President Bush, who seems to regard his calling as nothing short of apostolic? (It is all too easy to lose sight of the critical distinction between a leader who prays for G-d's help in making a decision, and a leader who believes that, because he prays, G-d endorses his every decision.)

No one can know the answers to these questions in advance, but all of us – Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and liberals – can decide that we will keep vigilant and not surrender our divinely-given ability to think critically. All of us can decide that, the moment any of the above questions begins to look as though its answer is "yes," we will apply continuous pressure to senators, congresspeople, and administration officials, letting them know that Americans will not be pushed over the edge – neither the right edge nor the left edge.

And we can pray every day, as we do each Shabbat, that G-d will protect the United States and Israel and grant them the wisdom to do not only what is necessary but also what is right.



**Shabbat services  
Saturday mornings  
at 9:15 AM**

**Kabbalat Shabbat  
services the first  
Friday of the  
month at 6:00 PM**



**Jack Valancy**

President's Perspectives...

# Our Dream Is Coming True

As I write this on a beautiful day in early November, construction of our new, accessible front entrance is almost done. The chain link fence came down a few weeks ago. New trees and shrubs beautify our grounds. Lawn starter proclaims lush grass next spring. Our dream is coming true.

Our dream began in 1998, when the members of Temple Beth El and Heights Synagogue began worshipping together at the Mayfield JCC. It would have been easier for us to disband and join other congregations, but it would not have been as satisfying. We wanted to honor our traditions and, frankly, we have an independent streak.

We are not like other congregations. Our ads say, "You probably wouldn't like our shul," but there is actually a lot to like:

- We do a full service every Shabbat and holiday morning.
- Women and men are equal in all aspects of synagogue life.
- Our members lead services.
- We learn from Rabbi Adler, our members, and our friends during and after services.
- We use familiar and new melodies.
- We have great kiddushes!
- We don't have a brand name.

Despite being different, we like each other, and we like what we're doing together. We like worshipping together. We like learning together. We like celebrating together. We really like it when we can do all three, such as at our recent Kabbalat Shabbat.

We also like that we are improving the neighborhood and helping our community grow stronger. In 1998, we dreamed about having a home of our own. When we decided to buy our home four and a half years later, we dreamed about building a new, accessible entrance.

We like welcoming friends into our home. Perhaps you remember the coziness of your neighborhood synagogue, a place where everyone knew and cared for each other. Whether you live nearby or far away, we would like to be your neighborhood synagogue today.

You don't have to pay to pray at Beth El – The Heights Synagogue. It's not as if we don't need the money. It's just one of our founding principles. When we set out to build our home for worship, learning, and community we decided to welcome all Jews, regardless of their financial circumstances.

If you think you might like this kind of synagogue, please join us for our services, educational programs, and social events. (Why not come to our Hanukkah party on Saturday, December 11?) If you like us and like what we are doing, contact me (216-371-1439, [jack@valancy.com](mailto:jack@valancy.com)) or leave a message for our Membership Chair, Karen Kugelman, at the shul at 216-320-9667 or via e-mail at [info@bethelheights.org](mailto:info@bethelheights.org). We will be happy to tell you how you can share our dream.

**QUESTIONS?  
CONCERNS?  
COMMENTS?  
COMPLAINTS?**  
As always, please do not hesitate to contact your President by e-mail [jack@valancy.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:benews@apk.net) (You must have the free Acrobat Reader in order to open the attachment.)

# Developments in Development

We have been in our new building for just over a year. What a year it has been! Since making the decision to purchase a permanent home for our congregation, we have raised over \$200,000 in pledges toward its rehabilitation. The reconstruction of a new fully accessible entry is nearing functional completion and aesthetic improvements to the exterior and interior are in progress.

We have hosted Shabbat and holiday celebrations, mourned our losses together, and shared numerous simchas. We have added new members. Our Adult Education offerings have expanded and our children's programming is progressing. To promote our longevity, both long- and short-term fiscal plans are being tackled by our hard-working Finance Committee.

All this we are doing under the spiritual leadership of our beloved rabbi and a smoothly functioning Board. We have added two part-time staff members, James Gay, our custodian, and Lynn Shiller, our

bookkeeper, to free our many volunteers to concentrate on the educational, spiritual, and social affairs of the synagogue. However much of the load is shouldered by volunteers, we still need to meet a sizeable annual budget just to maintain ourselves.

If you have given money to Beth El – The Heights Synagogue this year in the form of dues or other gifts, we thank you. You have enabled a traditional, egalitarian Jewish presence to maintain itself in the Heights area. If you are currently considering your year-end giving, I ask that you keep Beth El – The Heights Synagogue in mind. If you have not yet paid your pledge to the Capital Fund, please fulfill that pledge immediately so that we may, in turn, fulfill our contracts for the recent construction and landscaping. The generosity of our donors will help to balance our budget and continue the fine work we have begun.

~ Emily Dennis  
Development Chair

## November Kabbalat Shabbat a Big Success! More Planned.

Everyone who attended November's Kabbalat Shabbat had fun! Each family had the opportunity to light candles. We worshipped and welcomed the Shabbat Queen together in the sanctuary. We enjoyed a delicious dinner. We socialized. We sang. We benched. As the evening ended, Rabbi Adler was with a group of enthusiastic singers belting out favorites and banging the table.

We thank Lisa Berusch for organizing everything and Marvin Palevsky for catering the dinner. He was assisted in the kitchen by Jeanette Buchwald, Debbie Michelson, Nina Sobel, and Blanche Valancy. These and other members staffed the serving line

and helped clean up. Marvin makes everything from scratch. He buys the finest ingredients and prepares them exquisitely. We may be a small congregation, but we have the best chef in town.

Lisa scheduled the Kabbalat Shabbat, designed its flyer, handled reservations, organized the kitchen crew, led services, helped serve, managed the dining room, and helped clean up the kitchen.

Lisa plans to organize monthly Kabbalat Shabbats – some with dinner, some without. Please join us to welcome Shabbat!

~ Jack Valancy

## Kabbalat Shabbat Services

**Beginning with the November 5 service, Beth El-The Heights Synagogue will be holding Kabbalat Shabbat services on the first Friday night of each month.**

**Services are at 6:00 PM and last about one hour.**

**If you have ideas for services, or would like to participate in the planning or leading of these services, please call or e-mail Lisa at 216-397-9060 or lberusch@sbcglobal.net.**

**Upcoming dates:  
December 3  
January 7  
February 4  
March 4  
April 1**

## Scheduling Your Event at Beth El-The Heights Synagogue

**If you wish to schedule an event at the synagogue, you must contact Fern Grunberger to book/confirm the date in the shul calendar.**

Fern may be reached at 216-321-8570 or [FERNETTE@aol.com](mailto:FERNETTE@aol.com)

**You are also responsible for contacting Rabbi Adler to confirm that your event can (ritually) be held on the date you desire.**

**Rabbi Adler can be reached at 216-381-4480 or [moshetzvi@earthlink.net](mailto:moshetzvi@earthlink.net)**

## Fern Grunberger Is Now Our Scheduler!

Fern has volunteered to maintain Beth El-The Heights Synagogue's Calendar. This is how scheduling will work:

Contact Fern when you want to schedule an event. She will check the calendar and let you know if the date is available.

YOU are responsible for checking with the Rabbi and others to be certain you can, in fact, hold the event as planned on the date you desire.

She will forward the dates of confirmed events to our newsletter editor and web master.

YOU are responsible for providing them with detailed information about your event. (Carol Bruml: [benews@apk.net](mailto:benews@apk.net), David Shutkin: [dshutkin@jcu.edu](mailto:dshutkin@jcu.edu))

Contact Fern to schedule your event: 216-321-8570 or [FERNETTE@aol.com](mailto:FERNETTE@aol.com) Please put "Beth El Calendar" in the subject line.

Keeping our calendar straight is a giant step toward organizational bliss!

Thank you Fern!

Jack Valancy

## Judith Gerblich to Assume Role of B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator

Many thanks to Judith Gerblich who has volunteered to become our b'nai mitzvah coordinator! She will assume her new responsibilities next month.

## Adult Ed

Learners' Services will be held on December 4 and 18, at approximately 10:15 AM, in the library, topics TBA

Kiddush with Rashi on December 4: Join Cheryl Birkner Mack at kiddush to discuss highlights of Rashi's commentaries on Sefer Bereshit (Genesis).

Siegal College is offering Intensive Classical Hebrew Courses beginning on January 28, Monday through Thursday 8:00-10:00 PM. You can learn how to decode and understand simple biblical narratives and prayers. For more information please call Siegal College at 216-464-4050.

## Fall Picnic: Minimum Turnout, Maximum Enjoyment!

Our fall picnic was small – but the members who attended enjoyed a lot of conversation and conviviality around the table at Horseshoe Lake on a Sunday afternoon when it was extremely pleasant to be outdoors. We became better acquainted with some and newly acquainted with others. The volleyball nets beckoned us to come and play but, alas, we were too few. The setting was ideal and, hopefully, we can plan to use the Shaker Lakes facility again in the future.

## Table Tennis Club Seeks New Home

Can you suggest a new home for the Cleveland Heights Table Tennis Club? They will be leaving our social hall by the end of January, and are seeking a new host. We're sad to see them go, but we need the space taken up by their tables.

If you know about suitable quarters, please contact the club's president, Ellen Darby, at 216-321-5572 or [darbyvideo@sbcglobal.net](mailto:darbyvideo@sbcglobal.net).

## Hanukkah Party Help Still Needed

Our dear friend Debbie Michelson has been planning our congregation's Hanukkah parties since our first celebration in 1998 - and Debbie's planning this year's party, on December 11, as well.

This year, Debbie needs a little extra help with our Hanukkah party because she has been busy planning her Thanksgiving weekend wedding!

We all want a great Hanukkah party, with lots of food, lots of activities, lots of fun -and- we don't want Debbie to be overwhelmed.

If you can help, please contact Debbie Michelson [michelson@goodmanweissmiller.com](mailto:michelson@goodmanweissmiller.com) or 216-371-0327

# NEWS FROM BETH EL

# חדשות

## Refuah Sh'lema to: רפואה שלימה! תודה!

- Clara Dick
- Loretta Gatins

## Mazel Tov to: מזל טוב!

- Carol and Bill Bruml, whose daughter, Sarah, married Christopher Buckley in Lowell, MA, on October 30. Older daughter, Deborah, served as Maid of Honor, and was a tremendous help to her sister!
- Debbie Michelson and Jon Lash, who will be married at Beth El-The Heights Synagogue on November 27. Theirs will be the first wedding in our new home.
- Solomon Rabinovich, whose grandson, Eugene, earned a gold medal in the 2004 World Piano Competition last July and performed at Carnegie Hall on October 30. Eugene was featured in the November 4 Sun Press's "Snapshot" column.
- Laura and Marty Rabinowitz, who each recently celebrated a milestone birthday.

## Yasher Koah to:

- Nili Adler, who conducted two teacher training workshops at the Agency for Jewish Learning in Pittsburgh on November 14. Topics: "Teaching Hebrew for T'fillah" and "Teaching Hebrew with the Total Physical Response Method (TPR)."

## Thanks for Kiddush Sponsorships

to: תודה!

- November 20 - Anonymous
- November 27 - Laura and Marty Rabinowitz in honor of Barbara and Abraham Osofsky's visit.



## Thanks for Donations to: תודה!

- Ruth G. Ballonoff in memory of her mother, Doris Glaser
- Howard and Ida Bergson
- Marc and Michele Krantz in memory of Laille Gabinet
- Robin Dubin and Richard Krueck (designated for kitchen equipment)
- Beth and Scott Wachter
- Shirley Weiss

## Thanks for High Holiday Ticket

Donations to: תודה!

- Stephen Egar
- Paula Fishman
- Amy Rosenfield
- Leonard Tracht



## JECC Camp Sponsorships Available

The JECC is once again offering grants to help parents send their children to denominational camps for the summer, for the camper's first or second year. These would include camps such as Camp Ramah (Conservative) or Camp JRF (Reconstructionist). Parents do still pay a small portion of the cost. Requests must be filed with the JECC by March 15, 2005.

Please contact Marilyn Malkin at [mxm74@po.cwru.edu](mailto:mxm74@po.cwru.edu) or 216-932-1949 if you would like further information about this great offer!

If you are a member of Beth El-The Heights Synagogue and have been thinking about camp for your child this summer this is a good way to help make it affordable.

# CALENDAR, DECEMBER 2004

כסלו 5765

Thursday, December 2, 7:00 PM – **Hanukkah Party planning meeting** at the Valancy's home, 3021 Yorkshire, Cleveland Heights.

Friday, December 3, 6:00 PM – **Kabbalat Shabbat services**

Saturday, December 4, 10:15 AM – **Learners' Service** in the library

After services – **Kiddush with Rashi**, highlights of Rashi's commentary on Sefer Bereshit (Genesis)

Tuesday, December 7 – **First Night of Hanukkah**

Saturday, December 11, 6:15 to 9:30 PM – **7th Annual Hanukkah Party**, at the synagogue. Reservations due by December 1 (see information below or in the enclosed flyer.)

Friday, January 7, 6:00 PM – **Kabbalat Shabbat services**

Saturday, December 18, 10:15 AM – **Learners' Service** in the library

Sunday, January 23, Time to be announced – **Required session on B'nai Mitzvah** for families with children aged 9-12. (See sidebar at right.)

Families with children ages 9-12:

Save the Date for Required Session on B'nai Mitzvah January 23, 2005. (Time to be announced.)

Cheryl Birkner Mack will lead families of upcoming B'nai mitzva and all interested members in an exploration of the historical development of this life cycle event, and its religious and social significance.

Adina Davidson will help us examine issues of human development as they apply to the child and other members of the family.

Requirements and guidelines of our synagogue will also be distributed.

This will be a recurring program.

Cheryl Birkner Mack



שנהג שנהג שנהג

## Seventh Annual Hanukkah Party

Saturday, December 11, 6:15 to 9:30 PM

Havdalah and Hanukkah Candle-Lighting

Music and Dancing ~ Light Dinner Buffet and Dessert

\$10 per adult, \$6 per child, Maximum of \$35 per family

Advance reservations required. (See enclosed flyer.)

Mail payment to Blanche Valancy, 3021 Yorkshire Road, Cleveland Heights, 44118, by December 1. (Make all checks payable to Beth El-The Heights Synagogue and enclose a note, specifying how many adults and how many children will attend.)



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# What's Going On?

## BETH EL

### The Heights Synagogue

Issue 16, December 2004



## Landscaping

With Emily Dennis' supervision, the Eden Group has landscaped our building exterior, adding trees, bushes, and plants that give the exterior a whole new look. Because of the construction, we got the grass in a bit late, so that it may not germinate this fall. Eden Group is ready to reseed in the spring if necessary.

Want to contribute to this effort? A "Greens for Greenery" ongoing donation sheet is included with this newsletter for your convenience.

## Sanctuary and Social Hall Painting

By the time the newsletter hits the streets, the back part of the sanctuary should have repaired plaster and a new coat of paint, and some repairs should have been made to the social hall walls. Stay tuned for more interior decorating to come.

## The Home Stretch

We are truly on the home stretch with the construction of our elevator addition. Drywall is up, doors are installed, windows are painted, the front walk is in place, and the canopy over the new door is up. Final completion of the canopy, interior painting in the addition, and final electrical work after the painting remain. The installation of the elevator itself continues to move slowly, but we are hoping that it will be complete before this newsletter hits the streets. Once the elevator is in and the installation crew is out of the way, the final interior touches will be done in no time.

You may have noticed that work on the older part of the building has been completed as well. Carpenters have repaired the building trim where needed, all trim has a new coat of paint, downspouts have been reattached, and new doors have been installed. We no longer have flaking paint on the porticos over our office wing doors, and there's only one color of brown paint on the building exterior, instead of the three or four different colors that were there before.

In addition to all of the repair work on the older parts of the building, Bill Schmitt has been working to add new emergency lights and exit signs in the building interior. These lights help us meet fire code and will be a big help if we have a power failure.

# Give Green for Greenery!



As you can see, we have recently landscaped our property with the installation of trees, shrubs and perennials! To defray the costs to the Capital Fund, we invite you to purchase plants, perhaps to memorialize a family member, to honor a loved one, or just to be generous. Hurry, before the supply runs out! *(Numbers in parentheses indicate the total number of that particular plant in our landscaping plan.)*

## Trees and Shrubs Available for Purchase:

2	(4) Red Maples	@\$250 each	= _____
0	(2) Serviceberry	@\$135 each	(Sold out!)
0	(1) Hornbeam	@ \$95 each	(Sold out!)
0	(1) White Fringetree	@\$105 each	(Sold out!)
0	(1) White Spruce	@\$150 each	(Sold out!)
2	(12) Boxwood	@ \$25 each	= _____
0	(2) Holly	@ \$40 each	(Sold out!)
28	(29) Juniper	@ \$40 each	= _____
3	(35) Pink Spirea	@ \$15 each	= _____
0	(3) French Lilac	@ \$30 each	(Sold out!)
1	(11) Korean Spice Viburnum	@\$40 each	= _____
0	(1) Allegheny Viburnum	@ \$40 each	(Sold out!)

## Perennials

25	(25) St. John's Wort	@ \$5 each	= _____
0	(5) Siberian Iris	@ \$5 each	(Sold out!)
4	(5) Black-Eyed Susans	@ \$10 each	= _____
2	(2) Ornamental Grass	@ \$10 each	= _____

## Landscaping Maintenance (Labor)

@ \$35/hour = \_\_\_\_\_

## Total

\_\_\_\_\_

Checks should be made out to the Beth El Capital Fund, and should be accompanied by a note regarding the purpose of the donation.

Mail to Beth El-The Heights Synagogue, at 3246 Desota Ave., Cleveland Heights, OH.  
All donations will be acknowledged and are fully tax deductible.

Donor: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor/Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

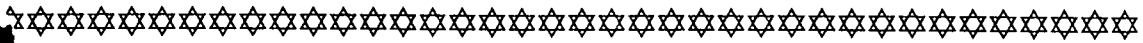
*Next spring we will create a "volunteer" garden on the east side of the building, with divisions from our own home gardens. Hang onto your burgeoning hostas, ferns and other plants until then!*

**Questions? Contact Emily Dennis at 216-589-0663 or [glendennis@rmrc.net](mailto:glendennis@rmrc.net)**



**BETH EL**

The Heights Synagogue



BETH EL --

The HEIGHTS SYNAGOGUE

**Seventh Annual  
HANUKKAH PARTY**

*Come celebrate Hanukkah with Beth El - The Heights Synagogue at our  
SEVENTH ANNUAL HANUKKAH PARTY!*



MUSIC AND DANCING!  
HAVDALAH SERVICE!  
CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONY!  
LIGHT DINNER BUFFET & DESSERT!



When: Saturday, December 11, 2004  
6:15 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Where: OUR HOME  
3246 Desota Road, Cleveland Heights

Admission: \$10.00 per adult; \$6.00 per child  
Maximum Payment of \$35.00 per family



**ADVANCE RESERVATIONS REQUIRED!** -- Please mail your reservation and payment to Blanche Valancy at 3021 Yorkshire Road, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118 by December 1, 2004.

NEW FACES ARE WELCOME! Please encourage friends and family to meet us and join in the fun!!



**YES!** I/We can come to the Beth El Hanukkah Party on December 11, 2004!  
Enclosed is my payment in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(Please make checks payable to Beth El.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

No. Adults: \_\_\_\_\_ No. Children \_\_\_\_\_

Send completed tear-off sheet to: Blanche Valancy, 3021 Yorkshire Rd.,  
Cleveland Hts., Ohio 44118.

For more information, call Debbie Michelson at (216)371-0327.

