



# BETH EL NEWSLETTER

## The Heights Synagogue

November, 2007

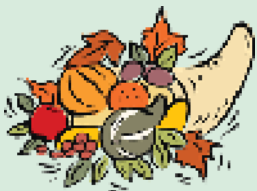
חשוון \ כסלו 5768



Rabbi Moshe Adler

*Give thanks  
for a little,  
and you  
will find  
a lot.*

**Hausa proverb,  
from Nigeria**



**Join us for  
Kabbalat Shabbat,  
Friday,  
November 2,  
5:30 PM.  
Reservations due  
by October 29,  
if you wish  
to stay for dinner.**

## A Cause for Giving Thanks

Thomas Jefferson's reminder that "the price of freedom is eternal vigilance" seems to be paying off.

According to a recent report in the New York Times ("For a Trusty Voting Bloc, a Faith Shaken," Oct. 7, 2007), "religious conservative leaders say they are having passionate debates in private over whether to choose a candidate based on viability or purity. Old allies find themselves fractured among the camps of Fred Thompson, Mitt Romney, John McCain, Duncan Hunter, Ron Paul and Mr. [Mike] Huckabee." It seems that Republican voters are not, as the religious right claims, uniformly persuaded that ideological purity should be the litmus test of a Republican candidate. The idea of settling for some of what you want when you can't get everything you want constitutes a large part of what makes an informed democracy work. The mere fact that the religious right is even considering such a pragmatic idea is a positive sign.

Nevertheless, one swallow doesn't mean it's spring. The reason freedom requires eternal vigilance is that those who would abridge freedom never sleep – especially when they believe they're doing the will of G-d.

A case in point is Senator John McCain's recent statement that "the Constitution established the United States of America as a Christian nation." Were America to become a Christian nation, the religious freedom of Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, agnostics, and atheists would become dependent on the integrity of people

like McCain. It would be considered a gift to be granted rather than an inalienable human right. A man who first refers to Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson as "agents of intolerance," but who then accepts an honorary degree from Falwell's Liberty University, is capable – when desperate for votes – of declaring America a Christian nation. I'd hate to have my religious freedom depend on his good will.

Of more immediate concern, however, is the fact that McCain's claim is not only objectionable; it is downright false. Not only does the Constitution not "establish the United States of America as a Christian nation"; it does exactly the opposite. The First Amendment reads: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." It is this clause that Thomas Jefferson called "a wall of separation between church and state." The rights of minority religions should not be dependent on the good will of any person or group, but rather on the Constitution's universal "wall of separation."

The issue at stake is whether America will remain a pluralistic democracy or become a society where (in George Orwell's words) all people are equal but some are more equal than others. As long as America refuses to go down the road to theocracy, it will remain a place of hope and good will for people of all faiths and for those of no faith. To the extent that it has thus far managed to do so, we have cause to give thanks.

Happy Thanksgiving. (And don't forget to *bensch!*)  
Rabbi Moshe Adler

Beth El - The Heights Synagogue builds vibrant Jewish community.

We welcome all in participatory, traditional, egalitarian worship and learning.

Rabbi Moshe Adler ♦ Saturday Morning Services at 9:15, 3246 Desota Ave., Cleveland Hts., OH 44118 ♦ ☎216-320-9667



**Jack Valancy**

**QUESTIONS? CONCERNS?  
COMMENTS?  
COMPLAINTS?**  
Please do not  
hesitate to contact  
your President by  
e-mail [president@bethelheights.org](mailto:president@bethelheights.org)  
or home telephone  
(216) 371-1439

**HELP US  
STAY IN TOUCH!**  
Please be sure we  
have your current  
contact information.  
Send changes to  
Blanche Valancy,  
[blanche@valancy.com](mailto:blanche@valancy.com)  
or call her at  
(216) 371-1439

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replying to the  
message you will  
receive, or visit  
<http://valancy.biglist.com/sub>

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(You must have the free Acrobat Reader from Adobe in order to open the file.)

# Why we need an elevator

In last month's column, I described how the heavy storms that tore through Cleveland on August 7<sup>th</sup> severely damaged our synagogue. Falling branches ripped 18 holes in the flat roof above our sanctuary reading table. Water damaged our ceiling, walls, and carpeting. A light fixture fell. The elevator shaft flooded and water damaged our elevator.

Our dedicated members quickly responded to limit the damage and clean up the mess. They coordinated repairs to our building with days to spare before we welcomed everyone to worship on Rosh Hashanah. As I write this shortly after Simhat Torah, we do not know when we will be able to repair our elevator. We are certain to incur tens of thousands of dollars of out-of-pocket expenses to cover our insurance deductible, non-covered repairs, and improvements to prevent future problems. We need to get our elevator running again to fulfill our dream.

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 decided that people should not have to pay to pray: members' financial situations do not limit their participation in our congregation. In February 2000, we became Beth El – The Heights Synagogue. We learned together during our early days - and we've been learning ever since.

From the beginning, we planned to acquire a home of our own. Our Facilities Team evaluated many properties. Our congregation voted to acquire our synagogue in March 2003. We received the keys in July and our learning curve became steeper and bumpier.

A Lutheran congregation built the original Gothic structure in the 1920s. A Jewish congregation acquired it in the late 1940s. They enlarged the sanctuary to create the area behind our reading table and built a Greek Revival main entrance. The stairs pitched steeply to stay within the property line. They were dangerously deteriorated when we acquired the building.

Our Board had to decide between repairing the vertiginous stairs and building a new, accessible main entrance. We quickly decided the latter. We worked with our architect to design our main entrance with lobby doors on grade and an elevator to our sanctuary and social hall. Generous donations by our members and friends, including a major grant from the Schnurmann Foundation in memory of Helen and Julius Weil, enabled us to celebrate the Grand Opening of our accessible main entrance in June 2005. Members who needed the elevator had tears of appreciation in their eyes, as did the rest of us.

We meet the challenges of building our community with the strength of our relationships and our belief in our future together. We take collective and personal responsibility for each other. We finance our common needs. These axiomatic principles of Jewish community are founding principles of **Beth El – The Heights Synagogue.**

We need to get our elevator running so we can once again welcome all for worship, learning, and community. Our donations affirm our meaningful relationships, our shared values, and our connected stories. Please do your part with your check to our Rainy Day Fund.



# What **IS** the Biglist? Why should **I** subscribe?

The **Biglist** is our congregational listserv. Are you a subscriber? The **Biglist** is the best avenue to receive current events and reminders. If something happens between Newsletter publications, this is the best way to hear about it. If a member has information to impart, this is how you can receive it fast.

To subscribe, visit <http://valancy.biglist.com/sub> or send an e-mail to [bethel-sub@valancy.biglist.com](mailto:bethel-sub@valancy.biglist.com), and confirm your subscription by replying to the e-mail you will receive. If you change your e-mail address, remember to subscribe again.

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Once you are subscribed to Biglist, you can post items for all other subscribers to read. Just enter [bethel@valancy.biglist.com](mailto:bethel@valancy.biglist.com) in the “to” space of an e-mail and your communication will be sent to all subscribers, but only to subscribers.

Questions? Contact Blanche Valancy at [blanche@valancy.com](mailto:blanche@valancy.com) or 216-371-1439.

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## Other ways to stay in touch with BE-THS

Members and friends can stay up-to-date on events and news in our Beth El-the Heights Synagogue family in many ways:

-Newsletter—Be sure we have your correct mailing address so you can find the Newsletter in your mailbox once a month. Send Blanche Valancy any changes at [blanche@valancy.com](mailto:blanche@valancy.com), or call her at 216-371-1439.

-Electronic newsletter—Read it in full color! Send an e-mail to editor Carol Bruml at [news@bethelheights.org](mailto:news@bethelheights.org). Specify whether you want to receive the newsletter as an attachment (usually less than one MB), or whether you prefer to be notified when it is available for one-click download from our web site. Also specify whether you want this in ADDITION to or INSTEAD of a paper copy.

-Web site—Check out [www.bethelheights.org](http://www.bethelheights.org) where you can link to our incredibly comprehensive calendar of events, check on the parsha of the week and find candle lighting times.

-Questions? Contact Blanche Valancy ([blanche@valancy.com](mailto:blanche@valancy.com), 216-371-1439) or Carol Bruml ([news@bethelheights.org](mailto:news@bethelheights.org), 216-932-9155) for help!

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## Current Membership Roster available

Please contact Blanche Valancy at [blanche@valancy.com](mailto:blanche@valancy.com) or 216-371-1439 if you wish to receive a copy of the 2007-2008 member roster. She will e-mail this to you in pdf form, suitable for storing on your computer or printing out as a hard copy to keep near your telephone.

If you do not have a computer, the roster can be printed and sent to you; this offer is for those without access to e-mail ONLY, because of the expense of first class postage.

Any errors in the roster should be reported to Blanche so the database can be corrected.

*The greatest gift one can give is thanksgiving.*

*In giving gifts, we give what we can spare, but in giving thanks we give ourselves.*

**David Steindl-Rast**  
**Gratefulness,**  
**the Heart of Prayer**



Dear Friends,

With the completion of this year's fall holiday season, I want to express my appreciation to you for being the congregation you are:

To our prayer leaders and Torah readers, to those who led the singing of *piyyutim* (liturgical poems), to the small group of singers whose melodies engaged the entire congregation, to the behind-the-scenes organizers and coordinators who made things flow smoothly, and to all of our worshippers – a hearty “*yasher koach*” for filling this year's High Holy Day season with meaning and beauty.

“*Yasher koach*,” too, to those who joined us for Sukkot and Simhat Torah, helping us pass from the heavenly joy of davening on Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur to the earthly joy of waving the *lulav* and *etrog*, of eating and chatting together in the *sukkah*, and of dancing in celebration as we completed a year's cycle of Torah reading and began a new one. Special thanks to Marvin Palevsky, not only for working with Merry Lugasy to prepare food, but also for putting up the synagogue *sukkah*.

In his classic book, *Halakhic Man*, Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik notes that the goal of Judaism is not to transport us to the heavenly realm but to bring the heavenly realm down to earth. You've achieved that goal. Having seen that it is humanly possible, we are encouraged to try to achieve it again and again in our worship, our learning, and our daily lives.

As HaShem said to Joshua, “*Hazak ve-ematz* be strong and of good courage.”

Rabbi Moshe Adler

## SSBJA to discuss author Michael Chabon

SSBJA began its fourth year of operation in September with twelve pieces by Nobelist Isaac Bashevis Singer in his book, *More Stories from My Father's Court* (2000). The stories are narrated by a boy of about 11 years, from his observations of the goings-on in his father's court. The father performs as a beth din rabbi in early 20th-century Warsaw to whom people come freely for consultation on a surprisingly diverse range of problems and questions – often situations that we would not even dream of today. To our great satisfaction, we were able to discuss and opine on all twelve stories.

SSBJA will meet on Sunday, October 21, from 7:00 to 8:30 PM. Author Michael Chabon's book, *A Model World and Other Stories* (1991), has been selected. We will discuss Part II: “The Lost World,” pp. 129-207. Please call or e-mail Sondra Jacobs, 216-397-1481, or [sondrajacobs@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sondrajacobs@sbcglobal.net), if you need a copy of the text or for further details. New participants are welcome.



## Event planning:

- Creative ideas wanted!
- Volunteers needed!

Do you have an idea for an event for the synagogue? Bring the idea to the Board. Better yet, get involved in our Adult Ed Committee, our Child/Family Committee, or our Social Committee! We can use people to help plan and run our holiday events, such as our Hanukkah party, and special events, such as the Challah Baking class we ran last year. Volunteers are needed!!!!

If you are interested, please contact Ditte Wolin at 216-932-9907 or [adwolin@dasa93.net](mailto:adwolin@dasa93.net).

## Social Committee

Do you have a great idea for a fabulous social event? Do you want to be a part of creating and planning new and different social events for our synagogue community? Join the Social Committee at BE–THS.

Contact Merry Lugasy by e-mail: [mlugasy@gmail.com](mailto:mlugasy@gmail.com) or call: 216-337-4761. Let's get together - the possibilities are endless!

# CALENDAR, NOVEMBER 2007

חשוון \ כסלו 5768

Friday, November 2, 5:30 PM – **Kabbalat Shabbat** services followed by dinner.  
(Reservations and prepayment required by October 29 for the dinner.)

Saturday, November 3, 8:00 PM – **Theatre Night** – A block of tickets has been purchased for *The Chosen* at the Cleveland Playhouse. If you did not reserve yours in time, call the Playhouse; you may still be able to attend on the same night, and schmooze with your BE–THS friends at intermission.

Saturday, November 10, approximately 10:30 AM – **Learners' Service** (See below for details.)

Saturday, November 17, following services – **Lunch and Learn: "Talking back online – Israeli style"** with Nili Adler, Director of Hebrew Studies at Siegal College of Judaic Studies. (See below for details.)

Saturday, November 24 – **No Learner's Service** (Thanksgiving weekend).

Saturday, December 1, following services – **Blanche and Jack Valancy will sponsor Kiddush**, in honor of Blanche's sixtieth birthday.

Friday, December 7 – **NO Kabbalat Shabbat service/dinner**. See you at the Hanukkah Party on December 9.

Sunday, December 9, 5:00 to 8:00 PM – **Hanukkah Party** (see page 8 for details, reservations requested by December 2)

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## Talking back online – Israeli style

Join us for a warm, vegetarian-friendly buffet lunch after Shabbat morning services on Saturday, November 17, and stay to learn from 1:00 to 2:30 PM. Nili Adler, Director of Hebrew Studies at Siegal College of Judaic Studies, will present *Talking back online – Israeli style*, a look at the latest cultural attitudes and Hebrew language developments through online reader responses to Israeli news articles. Hebrew knowledge not required; all examples will be provided in English. Nili has presented this topic at conferences in Chicago and in Australia and will bring it home to share with us. Free to members and friends, no RSVP required. Baby-sitting provided.

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## Learners' services

Shabbat mornings, November 10 and 24 – Come to our Learners' Services the second and fourth Shabbat mornings each month, beginning right after the High Holy Days, in October, and ending in May. Explore the meaning and history of prayers, customs and holidays. Practice praying at a slower pace. Ask questions and get answers. Meet around 10:30 AM in the library off the balcony, and rejoin the main service for the d'var Torah.

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## Torah readers needed

Welcome to all who would like to be Torah readers or chanters. Please contact Jeff Halpern if you are interested in reading a Torah portion in the coming months.

[jeffrey.halpern@case.edu](mailto:jeffrey.halpern@case.edu) or 216-321-5009



## Sponsor a Kiddush!

### Are you celebrating...

- > A birthday?
- > Anniversary?
- > Other simcha?

### Did someone in your family...

- > Graduate?
- > Accomplish a goal?
- > Win a prize?
- > Get a new job?

### Do you want to commemorate a Yahrzeit?

### Or are you feeling generous and happy to be part of the BE–THS family?

### Support our synagogue community: Sponsor a Kiddush!

Contact Merry Lugasy, at [mlugasy@gmail.com](mailto:mlugasy@gmail.com) or 216-337-4761 to discuss the possibility of co-sponsorship, partial sponsorship, etc.

# NEWS FROM BETH EL

# חדשות

*When I  
count  
my  
blessings,  
I count  
you  
twice.*

Irish Proverb



## Yasher Koah to:

יישר כוח!

- Nili Adler, who is scheduled to present a paper on Hebrew pedagogy at the Midwest Jewish Studies Association Conference in Chicago on October 21.
- **Deborah Smith**, who has been appointed Magistrate in Family Court in Akron. We wish her lots of success in her new job. Mazel Tov!

## Mazel Tov to:

מזל טוב!

- **Ken Bardach** on the birth of grandson, Max Aaron Bardach, born September 14 (Rosh Hashanah), 2007. His Hebrew name is Aaron ben Josi; parents are Robert H. Bardach and Reut Bardach (nee Bensaadon). Reut is a Sabra who emigrated from Israel to south Florida with her family in 1984.

Rob is working as an English Department Chair for a group of inner city high schools in Baltimore, MD, and finishing his doctoral dissertation. Reut is in her third year of medical school, doing most of her clinical rotations in the Baltimore area.

## Condolences to:

ביחום אבלים

- **Robin Dubin and Richard Krueck**, on the recent death of Robin's mother, Charlotte Dubin.

## Thanks, to our Sukkah Hop hosts: תודה!

- Michael and Shelley Bloomfield
- Mark and Adina Davidson
- Harvey and Karen Kugelman
- Beth and Scott Wachter

## Thanks for the help with the October newsletter mailing to: תודה!

- Gerson Carr
- Kimberly Carr
- Robin Dubin
- Sue Klein
- Alicia Rosales
- Jillian Rosales
- Vicki Rosales
- Blanche Valancy

## Thanks for contributions to:

תודה!

- Rabbi Moshe and Nili Adler, in memory of their parents, Yehuda Leib and Nahama Shultz-Shalit Z"l and Max and Clara Adler Z"l.
- Rabbi Moshe and Nili Adler, in thanks to Eran Shiloh.
- Rabbi Moshe and Nili Adler, in thanks to the Buchwald Gelles family.
- **Ken Bardach**, in honor of his new grandson, Max Aaron Bardach.
- **Bill and Carol Bruml**
- **Joel and Julie Falck**, in memory of Chari Shanker Z"l.
- **Susanne Friedland and Michael Beerman**
- **Joe and Mia Buchwald Gelles**
- **David Kazdan and Laura Gooch**, in memory of Chari Shanker Z"l.
- **Ingeborg and Joseph Kennedy**
- **Philip Kalina and Donna Spiegler**
- **Kyle and Cynthia Rose**
- **Bill and Ilana Schmitt**, to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund, with thanks.
- **Ellen and Harold Ticktin**, to the Scholar-in-Residence program.
- **Leonard Tracht**, in memory of Dora and Leonard Tracht Z"l.

## Thanks for Rainy Day Fund contributions to:

- Leah Brenner
- Frank and Jeanette Buchwald
- Emily Dennis
- Art and Elaine Friedman
- Joe and Mia Buchwald Gelles
- Mickey and Sue Greenberg
- Abby and Jeff Halpern
- Gabi Hays
- Irvin and Theresa Krieger
- Richard Krueck and Robin Dubin
- Vicki Spalding-Rosales
- Menachem Shoham and Deborah Smith
- Arnold Stone
- Connie Sussman
- Jack and Blanche Valancy
- Gerald Zahler

**Thanks for High Holy Day Ticket**

**Contributions to:**

**תודה!**

- Debbie and Leon Adato
- Larissa and Yakov Elgudin
- Bronia Gerblich
- Lillian Grunberger
- Mrs. Leo Guzik
- Julie and Louis Handler
- Sharona Hoffman
- James Johnson
- Dalia Kutnick
- Michael Leach
- Gary and Marilyn Magden
- Randy and Sarah Mendel
- Paul Piccus
- Solomon Rabinovich and Esy Gurevich
- Adrienne Schaffer
- Aaron Starr and Idit Zehavi
- Julie and Mat Tonti
- V. Jay Urch

**Thanks for Kiddush sponsorship to: תודה!**

- October 20 – Lisa and Stephen Elrad, in honor of their daughter, Ashton, who became Bat Mitzvah that day.
- December 1 – Blanche and Jack Valancy, in honor of Blanche's milestone birthday.

**Sue Klein wishes to extend thanks to those who have read Torah over the last several months:**

**תודה!**

- Rabbi Moshe Adler,
- Nili Adler
- Joe Buchwald Gelles
- Shelley Bloomfield
- Connie Friedman
- Leon Gabinet
- Laura Gooch
- Abby Halpern
- Laura Rabinowitz
- Marty Rabinowitz
- Miriam Rabinowitz
- Jamie Saunt
- Eran Shiloh
- Leah Stella
- Marvin Warshay

...and special thanks to Lisa Berusch and Stacia Dearmin, who have helped Sue out when she's had difficulty with scheduling Torah readers.

*Gratitude is something of which none of us can give too much.*

*For on the smiles, the thanks we give, our little gestures of appreciation, our neighbors build their philosophy of life.*

**A.J. Cronin**



# Yahrzeits, November 2007

HESHVAN	חשוון
David Nadle	20 Heshvan
Doris Glaser	21 Heshvan 5734
Morris Samet	21 Heshvan 5731
Gertrude Sobelman	21 Heshvan 5715
Hyman Cohen	22 Heshvan 5734
Philip Noll	23 Heshvan 5738
Morris Cohen	24 Heshvan 5684
Philip Reiss	24 Heshvan 5740
Ann Groger	25 Heshvan 5714
Anita Fertman Pereversky	27 Heshvan 5717
Harry Eisman	28 Heshvan 5703
Mindy Marfisi	28 Heshvan 5767
Beatrice Goodman	29 Heshvan 5716
Sarah Widzer	29 Heshvan 5731
Lena Berman	30 Heshvan 5708
Deborah Lindenbaum	30 Heshvan 5712

KISLEV	כסלו
Jennie Gordon	1 Kislev
Michael J. Margolis	4 Kislev 5726
Anna Ginsberg	8 Kislev 5726

Anna Gutentag	8 Kislev 5726
Borris Maeroff	8 Kislev 5705
Morris Rapport	8 Kislev 5735
Anna Javitch	9 Kislev 5726
Louis Ruskin	10 Kislev 5693
Jacob Malamud	11 Kislev 5715
Sidney Weisberg	11 Kislev 5752
Lawrence Davis	13 Kislev 5749
Joseph Magalnick	13 Kislev 5730
Harry Davis	14 Kislev 5718
Beatrice Anne Greenbaum	14 Kislev 5730
Nechama Schultz-Shalit	14 Kislev 5765
Jackie Davis	15 Kislev 5729
Harry Kastner	15 Kislev 5724
Emanuel Fromson	15 Kislev 5735
Esther Math	16 Kislev 5735
Helen Penetsky	17 Kislev 5737
Philip Bertman	18 Kislev 5676
William Grossman	19 Kislev 5741
Sylvia Della Stroom	19 Kislev 5738
Bracha Tenenbaum	19 Kislev

# Hanukkah Party

Latke dinner, music, singing  
and fun for the entire family.

Sunday, December 9, 2007  
5:00 to 8:00 PM

Adults \$10

Children (6-13) \$6

Children (5 and under) Free



Bring your own menorah  
to light at shul.

Yes, we will attend the Hanukkah party on Sunday, December 9.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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

Number of Adults (\$10) \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Children (6-13) (\$6) \_\_\_\_\_

Total paid: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I would LOVE to help: Plan \_\_\_\_, Decorate \_\_\_\_, Set-up \_\_\_\_, Clean up \_\_\_\_  
(Decoration and Set-up will be Sunday afternoon, prior to the party.)

Contact Merry Lugasy: [mlugasy@gmail.com](mailto:mlugasy@gmail.com) or 216-337-4761

Make checks payable to Beth El-The Heights Synagogue and mail to:  
Beth El-The Heights Synagogue  
3246 Desota Avenue  
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

*Reservations due by Monday, December 2, please!*

