

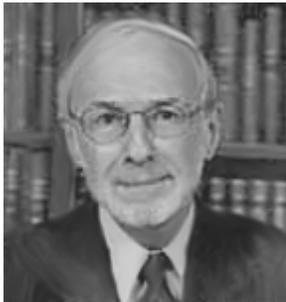


# BETH EL NEWSLETTER

The Heights Synagogue

May 2005

5765 ניסן אייר



Rabbi Moshe Adler

Notes from the Rebbe

## The Morning After

After the 2004 presidential election, in a column entitled "Will You Respect Them in the Morning," [Beth El-The Heights Synagogue Newsletter, December 2004] I raised these questions:

Will the Christian right, so influential in President Bush's victory, press its agenda with greater urgency than ever, confident that they 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?

Six months later, I must sadly answer these questions in the affirmative.

The Christian right is indeed pressing its theocratic agenda with alarming vigor and little resistance. Perhaps most conspicuous is its naked assault on the judicial branch of government. As they repeatedly assert

that Congress' role in judicial appointments is to rubber-stamp the President's choices, Congressional leaders issue vaguely worded yet unmistakably ominous threats against judges who do not rule in accordance with the Christian right's principles. If the Christian right has its way, the Supreme Court could become a kind of curia, dispensing correct doctrine and handing heretics over to the executive branch for punishment.

The executive branch, too, crowds up against the judiciary by pressing Congress not simply to renew but to expand the extraordinary powers granted Federal law enforcement agencies under the Patriot Act (an Orwellian euphemism if ever there was one!). If Congress accedes in this demand, America could become a police state. There would then be little need to repeal the Bill of Rights, since it would in fact have become a dead letter (though, thanks to Carl Rove's legendary thoroughness, Congress would probably seek to repeal it anyway, just to make sure it was dead).

As for the Administration's attempt to support drug companies by curtailing patients' ability to obtain reasonably-priced drugs, it has been overshadowed by President Bush's personal campaign to gut the Social Security program. If Social Security becomes privatized (excuse me: personalized), that will *(continued on page 3)*



**Kabbalat Shabbat Services at 7:30 PM, the first Friday evening of each month during the summer.**



**Jack Valancy**

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

As always, 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: 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 [news@bethelheights.org](mailto:news@bethelheights.org) (You must have the free Acrobat Reader in order to open the attachment.)

President's Perspectives, May 2005

# Our Diverse Congregation and Community

The greater Cleveland Jewish community is diverse. We vary in our levels of Jewish education and observance. We vary in our synagogue affiliation. We vary in where we live and in our wealth. We vary in our backgrounds and vocations. We vary in age and household structure. We vary in how we educate our children.

I notice this especially at simchas, when we welcome the joyful family's friends and relatives, many who ordinarily attend other synagogues in our diverse Jewish community. I enjoy talking with our new friends at kiddush after services, after educational programs, and during social events. Most people comment on our warmth.

What makes our congregation "warm"? Is it the usher who greets you as you enter our sanctuary? Is it our seating arrangement? Is it our members and friends who lead services? Is it our lay leaders' and Rabbi Adler's knowledgeable commentaries that illuminate the Torah and Haftarah readings? Is it our friendliness during kiddush?

Many tell me they like what we are doing. Some say they grew up in synagogues with services like ours. Others have grown to appreciate traditional services like ours. Is it our egalitarianism? Is it because we really enjoy worshipping together?

Some of our friends just join us for our educational programs. Many of our

members are skilled teachers. We also learn from distinguished scholars, writers, and friends with unique and interesting knowledge and experiences to share.

Some people mention that they have been to our building in the past and like what we have done to improve it. If they only knew how much money and muscle it has taken – and continues to require! We can take pride in our synagogue and its effect on revitalizing our neighborhood.

I get a special feeling when I welcome people who have a past relationship with Temple Beth El. I recently helped a new friend find her parents' and grandparents' memorial plaques in our sanctuary. She was soon weeping. Our restoration of Temple Beth El's plaques continues to honor its members' legacy.

More than 400 people receive this newsletter by mail, and dozens more receive it via e-mail and by downloading it from our web site. You, our readers represent the diversity of the Jewish community. If you like what you read about us, you will like being with us even more.

I look forward to welcoming you personally to Beth El - The Heights Synagogue. Join us this month for Shabbat services or one of the many educational programs described elsewhere in this newsletter. Come, be part of our warm, diverse Jewish home for worship, learning, and community!

**Beth El – The Heights Synagogue Newsletter, Vol. 7, No. 9, May 2005**

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<http://www.bethelheights.org/>

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General submittal deadline is the 8th of each month.

Published 12 times per year.

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

*("The Morning After," continued from page 1)* mark a major step in the Republican right's long march backward to laissez-faire economics. The slogan "compassionate conservatism" (another Orwellianism when President Bush uses it) seems to translate as "Leave no billionaire behind" – even if ordinary people must finance this welfare-in-reverse by gambling with the retirement fund that their lifelong labor has earned them.

In the December column referred to earlier, I urged that – should the questions it raised turn out to be answered in the affirmative – we all "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."

That time has arrived. We need to inundate our political leaders with letters, cards, e-mails, phone calls. We need to join with grass-roots political action groups that organize mass drives to keep up the pressure.

And, having learned our lesson, we need to support "kosher candidates," those who are consistently good on socio-ethical issues AND consistently good on Israel. Kashrut in candidates, like kashrut in animals, requires TWO signs. One simply won't do.



## Annual Meeting and Grand Opening Celebration

**Beth El–The Heights Synagogue's Annual Meeting  
will be held on June 26.**

**Following the meeting, we will hold a gala celebration  
of the completion of the new addition to our shul,  
with its fully accessible entrance.**

**Watch your June newsletter for details.**



# SHORT STORIES SECOND MINISERIES CLOSES WITH E.L. DOCTOROW

The selected *Sweet Land Stories* by E.L. Doctorow read like tightly plotted mysteries – filled with intrigue, suspense, unusual situations and characters that generated much discussion and speculation among the group’s participants in this final meeting of the current season.

Doctorow is concerned with “the tension between American institutions and the criminal elements that undermine them,” according to one reviewer. When writing about a murderous and manipulating woman (“A House on the Plains”), he doesn’t reveal her character until we’ve connected with her simpleton son, the narrator. The kidnapping hippie (“Baby Wilson”) is not so much a criminal as a misguided woman filled with love for the world. In his knowing treatment of the cynical abuse of power (“... Rose Garden”), Doctorow uses a terse style that builds suspense, common in thrillers. His examination of evil and near-evil is quite fascinating and completely different from themes by other authors the group has read.

While the Short Stories by Jewish Authors Reading/Discussion Group will suspend for the summer, participants agreed that they would like to resume with this program in autumn.



## Beth El–The Heights Synagogue Needs Additional Torah Readers

Join the Beth El Torah reader corps, acquire an exciting new skill, and help your shul. Rabbi Adler will teach a five-session summer course at Siegal College of Judaic Studies, beginning Tuesday, May 31.

By the end of this user-friendly course you will be able to chant any Torah section without relying on tapes.

Other courses in biblical and modern Hebrew are also available this summer at Siegal College. For more information please call Nili Adler at 216-464-4050 ex. 116 or e-mail [nadler@siegalcollege.edu](mailto:nadler@siegalcollege.edu)



## Garden Day

Garden Day will be May 15, from 10:00 AM until noon. Bring your perennial divisions and other “cast-offs” to beautify the east side and what is now the “main entrance” to the synagogue. Our gardening maven, Emily Dennis, will prepare the beds in advance.

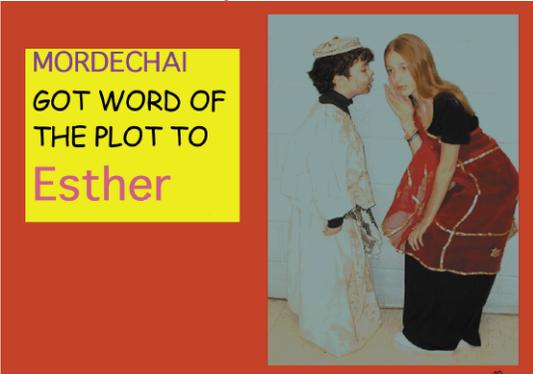
Volunteer gardeners will be needed to arrange and install the donated material. Bring plants, tools, gloves.

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





Joe Gelles, Jessie Palevsky, Teri Tomberg,  
baking hamantaschen



William Bloom and Sophie Shiloh



Maia and Anna Wachter as Salt and Pepper



Merry Lugasy, Marty Gelfand, Harvey Kugelman,  
Nissim Lugasy

# Purim

This Purim, we had a very unusual translation of the Megillah (thanks to Rabbi Adler) accompanied by pictures of our very own Synagogue Youth Acting Troop in Beth El–The Heights Synagogue’s first Purim multi-media presentation. This was almost thwarted by HAMAN, but the JEWS prevailed once again, as our technical crew of Ari Klein and Marvin Palevsky scrambled to find a second projector as the first one died in the first chapter!

Giggles and guffaws were heard throughout the Megillah reading as the 21st century translation amused the crowd. Afterwards, everyone partook of the hamantaschen made by our very own Synagogue Cooking School Class, led by master chefs Marvin Palevsky and Joe Buchwald Gelles.

Thanks to everyone who helped pull this event off!



You probably wouldn't like our shul.

REASON #15:

**We raise money the wrong way.**

We've just concluded a major fund-raising campaign to renovate our new/old building.

And we did it the "old-fashioned" way: we asked people to help just because it needed to be done.

No "naming opportunities." One plaque listing everyone who helped, A to Z. And a lot of people did help to make a place where we can worship together.

And a lot of pride that we did it that way.

If you think you might like this kind of place, give us a call.  
**Beth El–The Heights Synagogue. 216-320-9667.**

# Adult Education

**May 14**

**Learner's Service** – an in depth exploration of an element of Jewish prayer. Bring your questions. All are welcome. Begins at about 10:15 AM in library off balcony and rejoins the main service for the D'var Torah.

**Kiddush with Rashi** with Cheryl Birkner Mack – Highlights from the book of Vayikra - Leviticus. Join Cheryl, Middle School Judaics Teacher at Gross Schechter Day School and Adjunct Lecturer at the Siegal College of Judaic Studies, for an engaging exploration during kiddush.

**May 21**

**Lunch and Learn** – Alan Levenson, PhD, Professor of Judaic Studies at the Siegal College of Judaic Studies – Can Bible Scholarship be both Modern and Jewish? Join us for a vegetarian-friendly lunch after services and stay to learn. Free to members and friends, no RSVP required. Baby-sitting provided.

**May 28**

**Final Learner's Service of the year** – an in depth exploration of an element of Jewish prayer. Bring your questions. All are welcome. Begins at about 10:15 AM in library off balcony and rejoins the main service for the D'var Torah



## You probably wouldn't like our shul.

REASON #5:

**We change the melodies.**

We're a small shul with no *hazzan* — by choice.

Members lead all services. Some of us have great voices. Some of us don't. Some of us know the tunes you grew up with. Some of us teach melodies we learned last week somewhere else. Some give a learned *D'var Torah* or sermon, some just bring a fresh eye and thoughtful mind.

We try to take pride in every leader, every teacher, every melody. It's not always familiar, but it's always from the heart.

And we'd love to add your melodies.

If you think you might like this kind of place, give us a call.  
Beth El–The Heights Synagogue. 216-320-9667.

**Thanks for the help!**

תודה!

➤ **April Lunch and Learn:** Thanks to Zev Garber for a wonderful program. Thanks to Robin Dubin, Lisa Berusch and David Tomberg for coordinating and cooking.

➤ **March and April Learner's Service:** Thanks to Cheryl Birkner Mack and Nili Adler for inspiring teaching.

➤ **Jewish Short Stories Evenings:** Thanks to Joy Collas for leading thought-provoking discussions and to Sondra and Harvey Jacobs for organizing and hosting the evenings.

➤ **March Movie Night:** Thanks to Marvin Palevsky, David Shutkin and Joe Buchwald Gelles for a second fabulous movie night. We look forward to doing more movies next year.

# NEWS FROM BETH EL

# חדשות

## Mazel Tov to: מזל טוב!

➤ Honey Massey, who recently announced the birth of her first grandchild, Zev Massey, who was born on March 22. Proud parents are Orin and Deborah Massey.

➤ Zev Valancy, who will appear in a production of "She Loves Me" at Northwestern University in May, and who has also been awarded an internship at the Cleveland Playhouse for summer 2005.

## Refuah Sh'lema to: רפואה שלימה!

➤ Jon Lash, who is recuperating from surgery.

## Condolences to: ביחום אבלים

➤ The family of Sima Greenstein Z"L, who passed away in March. She and her husband, Theodore Greenstein Z"L, were active members of the original Temple Beth El in Shaker Heights for many years.

➤ Rhoda Jacobs and her family. Rhoda's mother, Barbara Rosenberg Z"L, recently passed away.

## Thanks for the help to: תודה!

- Gerson and Kimberly Carr
- Connie Friedman
- Fern Grunberger
- Merry Lugasy
- Marilyn Malkin
- David and Teri Tomberg
- and Blanche Valancy.

They all worked hard to get the complicated April mailing (newsletter and Passover Guide) completed. Blanche said they even had fun doing it together!

## Thanks for Kiddush sponsorships to:

- April 9 – Enid and Irving Kushner, in memory of Irving's mother, Rose Kushner.
- April 16 – David and Tamar Tomberg.

## Thanks for donations to: תודה!

- Kenneth Bardach, in memory of Clifford Bardach Z"L and Arthur Lewis Z"L
- Betty Bloomfield, in appreciation of the March 5 Lunch and Learn
- Bill and Carol Bruml, in honor of the birth of Honey Massey's grandson, Zev.
- Valeriy Elnatanov
- Mia and Joe Buchwald Gelles, in memory of Nili Adler's mother, Neḥama Schultz-Shalit Z"L
- Charles Gatins, in memory of his wife, Loretta Gatins Z"L
- Joel and Julie Rabin Falck
- Roger Kohn, in honor of his son's bar mitzvah, thanking all those who made it possible for him to attend.
- S. Lee Kohrman, for the Shabbat Kiddush Fund
- Richard and Ellen Lederman, in honor of Natan Kohn-Magnus' bar mitzvah
- Dr. Louis and Blanche Rakita, in honor of Enid Kushner's bat mitzvah
- Mr. and Mrs. John Taddeo, in memory of mother, Loretta Gatins Z"L
- Mary Valancy, in memory of her husband, Nathan Valancy Z"L
- Ieda and Marvin Warshay, in memory of Loretta Gatins Z"L, Laille Gabinet Z"L, Meyer Goldberg Z"L, Neḥama Schultz-Shalit Z"L
- Helen Weinberg
- Emanuel and Marjorie Wolinsky, in honor of Enid Kushner's bat mitzvah

## Put Your Meals on Wheels!

The Chesed Committee would appreciate having assistance with providing kosher suppers for a homebound member on Sundays and Mondays.

If you are able to help, and have not already responded to this request, please contact Beth Wachter at 216-932-5964 or [wachter@nacs.net](mailto:wachter@nacs.net).

Remember, many hands make light work. Join with us in this act of chesed – the more helpers, the better!

# CALENDAR, MAY 2005

ניסן אייר 5765

Saturday, April 30 – Seventh day of Pesah

9:15 AM – Morning Services

9:05 PM – Yom Tov candles may be lit and Kiddush recited.

Sunday, May 1 – Eighth day of Pesah

9:15 AM – Morning Services: Shaḥarit, Musaf, Yizkor

9:06 PM – Passover may be ended and Havdalah recited.

*(Please allow the Rabbi an hour to buy back your ḥametz before you use it.)*

Thursday, May 5 – Yom Hashoah יום השואה

Friday, May 6, 7:30 PM – Kabbalat Shabbat services

May 6-8 – Annual Shabbat Retreat

Thursday, May 12 – Yom Hazikaron, Israel Independence Day יום העצמאות

Saturday, May 14

About 10:15 AM – Learner's Service *(see page 6 for details)*

After services – Kiddush with Rashi with Cheryl Birkner Mack

– Highlights from the book of Vayikra - Leviticus.

Saturday, May 21, after services – Lunch and Learn with Alan Levenson, PhD

– Can Bible Scholarship be both Modern and Jewish? *(see page 6 for details)*

Friday, May 27 – Lag Ba Omer ל"ג בעומר

Saturday, May 28, about 10:15 AM – Last Learner's Service of the year.

*(see page 6 for details)*

Friday, June 3, 7:30 PM – Kabbalat Shabbat services

Sunday, June 26 – Annual Meeting and Grand Opening Celebration.

*See June newsletter for details.*



## What's Going On?

### BETH EL

The Heights Synagogue

May 2005

ניסן אייר 5765

On Friday afternoon, April 15, President Jack Valancy issued the long-awaited announcement: The elevator is working and is now available for use! Many thanks to Laura Gooch for her tireless efforts managing our construction project for the past 20 months. Thanks to our members and friends who worked on this project, and thanks to YOU for your generous donations to build our home for worship, learning, and community.

Sunday, June 26, will bring a double-header event. First, we will hold our annual meeting, for adult members only, at which we will hear a report on the state of the congregation and vote on the slate for the 2005-2006 Board. After business is concluded, we will celebrate the Grand Opening of our new entrance. The festivities will be open to all. Young and old, members and friends are encouraged to attend this gala celebration! Check your June newsletter for times and details.