FROM THE RABBI
LIVING IN DIFFICULT TIMES

We are living in very difficult times and navigating uncharted waters. You or someone in your family may be looking for work, or may be concerned about whether you will have clients or income in the months ahead. Perhaps you are wondering how to pay tuition now or save for your own retirement. All of us at Beth El are eager to be as helpful and supportive as we can during this difficult time for so many. As always, we welcome the opportunity to sit with you and listen to your concerns. Please do not hesitate to call for an appointment.

We have also heard people sadly confide that they want to leave the synagogue because they cannot afford to pay their dues. That is the last thing people in need should do. Your elected lay leaders, our interim executive director, Ann Gonski, myself and our staff, are all here to listen and to help make adjustments so that you can be a part of the synagogue when you most need it. These are times when communities are tested but also times when they prove their value.

Our sanctuary is also a place we encourage you to visit. Our prayer book and services are designed not only for joyful Shabbat services and celebrations, but as a place for mediation and reflection, for gathering strength and inspiration. Join us as we build community and connection, with one another and across time and space each week.

Several years ago, I was awarded a fellowship to study at the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem. I was in residence for a month at a time over three summers. The Institute—a center for pluralistic Jewish study with a focus on ethics—is an oasis of serious study and engagement with enduring questions. One morning, while my group of North American rabbis was in residence, a major political and military incident occurred—it was the talk of the local and international news. We couldn’t wait to hear what Rabbi David Hartman, the founder of the Institute and a leading commentator on contemporary Israeli issues would say about this event; surely it would have implications for a long time. Rabbi Hartman came in … and started talking about his new insight about Maimonides. Eventually, we couldn’t restrain ourselves and interrupted him to ask about what was on our mind: current events, the morning’s headlines, what are the implications of this news… Rabbi Hartman explained his position: authentic Torah study is the enduring engagement with the most important questions, the enduring conversations that have been going on for thousands of years and which are still compelling for us today. Yes, the world—the larger world and our individual, personal worlds—demand our attention, responsiveness and engagement. Yet our capacity to respond, our resilience to weather the storms of both personal and national life is bound up in our ability to see ourselves as part of a larger arc, spanning history and space. Thus, each week, even the poorest Jew can be transformed and transported through the celebration of Shabbat; and through study, he told us, we can join our voice to a continuing dialogue which began long before us and whose issues will long outlast us.

This is also, as you know, a time of challenge for Beth El. I continue to be moved and touched by the many stories of deep connection that people share with me about the place that this synagogue and other synagogues have played in their own lives. It is this knowledge about the importance of synagogue and Jewish community that gives me confidence in our community and its future.

(continued on page 6)
FROM THE PRESIDENT
JUNE 7TH
ANNUAL MEETING

On June 7th the Congregation will convene for its Annual Meeting and I urge you to come. This year we planned the meeting early in the month of June, before school ends, so that as many people as possible can come. We gather to vote on a slate of lay leaders and the new bylaws, as well as to learn about finances and plans for next year’s programs. We envision a lively exchange of ideas and an opportunity to chat with fellow members.

The Annual Meeting Planning Committee is preparing background information on the new bylaws and, in this issue of the Builder, Scott Spear offers brief biographies of the congregants who are on the slate. Heeding your input, the vote on the bylaws will allow members to vote on the key provisions item by item. Thank you so much to those of you who took the time to attend a meeting last month or to give your input on the proposed bylaws changes to the Bylaws Feedback Committee headed by Neil Levy and Cathy Stevens. Please look for news and information that will help you prepare to vote.

Every year we present a summary of Congregation Beth El’s financial condition. This year will be no different. As you know we are in earnest negotiations with City National Bank and are cautiously optimistic that we will reach an appropriate solution to managing our debt. Our goal for the Annual Meeting is for those who attend to understand where we are and what our financial plans are for the next year.

Finally we can look forward to a discussion of the programmatic vision for the next year by Rabbi Kahn. Our goal is to engage you not only in this discussion, but also in making that vision real. In particular, we hope to give you the opportunity to get involved in the education, ritual, social action, and social programs that are at the heart of this community. Program committee chairs will be on hand to share their plans and hear your ideas, and there will be opportunities to get involved with their work.

Incidentally, you do not have to wait until the Annual Meeting to find the perfect way to connect with Beth El. In this issue, long-time congregant Debbie Leon, who has volunteered to be our new Volunteer Coordinator, tells you how to make that connection.

Please do join us. The Annual Meeting will be from 10:00am – 1:00pm, Sunday June 7th and, of course, there will be a little nosh. The agenda will be sent out via eUpdate as soon as it is ready. Please mark your calendars.

Shalom,
Katherine
About Our Brick Wall....

Have you noticed, on your way to the social hall or sanctuary, our unfinished wall of engraved bricks? Have you wondered what was happening on the outer wall of the Beit Midrash? Many years in the making, this is our display of Simcha Bricks. This project began in our old home on Vine Street. We wanted to find an accessible way for every congregant to be a part of building our new synagogue, and hit upon the idea of Simcha Bricks. The bricks you see today, marking b’nai mitzvahs, celebrating wedding anniversaries, honoring congregational lay leaders, and recognizing acts of loving kindness, were purchased by congregants and their families 5, 6, 7 or even 8 years ago.

We’d love to see the wall completely filled up with memories of special occasions, celebrations and appreciation of the acts of personal kindness and care that take place every week in our congregation. I think the placement of this wall is particularly important, because it is what greets visitors as they enter our synagogue for services. What a great way to express the essence of our community.

We have room for 100 more bricks. Our bricks are made for us in Miami, Florida by -- I’m not kidding -- “Bricks ‘R’ Us”. Text can include English, symbols (Star of David) and Hebrew. Small bricks cost $250 and large are $500. We are very fortunate to have the perfect “Brick Maven” in congregant Joe Schlessinger. Joe is your go-to-guy if you are interested in purchasing a brick. He is also following up on missing or mis-engraved bricks for some of our congregants. (Ask Robinn Magid about our inadvertently shaving several years off her wedding date!) Joe can be reached at jschless@hotmail.com.

There are lots of other ways that each of us can contribute to the building of our community in these challenging economic times. We have many and varied opportunities for volunteering -- from greeting at Shabbat services to lending professional expertise via phone and computer. Contact our Volunteer Coordinator Debbie Leon if you are interested in lending a hand or some brain cells. You can contact Debbie at ruach@bethelberkeley.org.

Here are a few other ways you can help out: Purchase a Peet’s card and do a mitzvah while you sip your latte. Beverly Eigner and Odette Blachman are our Peet’s card mavens - you can contact Odette at oblachman@sbcglobal.net or, better yet, drop by our gift shop. Odette also runs our gift shop (with Robinn Magid), and is responsible for selecting the amazing variety of one-of-a-kind items we stock. If you are celebrating a happy occasion or want to honor a family member or friend, sponsor an upcoming Oneg. Beverly Eigner is our volunteer oneg coordinator - she can be reached at beigner@comcast.net.

My family sits down to dinner together most nights, and we always say a blessing over our food in appreciation. (We began doing this after Rabbi Kahn suggested, in one of his talks, that congregants seek ways to incorporate prayer into daily life.) I think life is sweeter if we stop to appreciate our many blessings, small and large. For me, this is what our Simcha Brick wall represents. Please free free to contact me at leyna@leynabernstein.com if you have questions about our fundraising programs or want to get involved.

-Leyna Bernstein
VP Fundraising

THE GARDENING PARTY CONTINUES...

Please join us in the Beth El landscape to weed and tend on Sunday, May 17 from 10 am to 1 pm or so. (Rain Cancel!) Bring gloves and tools. We will mostly be weeding, also some pruning and trimming back. It is helpful if you RSVP to susan.frankel@comcast.net but you can also just show up. Please invite your friends and family, no experience necessary.
President: Joanne Backman
Joanne’s professional career has focused on management of non-profit organizations, including finance, development, and executive management. More recently Joanne is consulting in the area of trust and estate administration with a private professional fiduciary in Oakland.

Having served as a board volunteer and in professional positions in Jewish and other non-profit organizations on both sides of the Bay, she brings a useful perspective to Beth El at a time of significant change for our congregation. In her leadership role on the Board, she is looking forward to working with our vibrant and highly talented community of members toward insuring a sustainable future for Beth El for the generations to come.

Joanne and her husband, Harry Pollack, members of Beth El for 22 years, have two daughters, Rebecca and Hannah, who have participated in the Nursery School, Religious School, Bat Mitzvah, Confirmation, Midrasha, and KEE TOV. Rebecca is currently teaching 5th grade in the Religious School. Joanne was a member of Beth El’s first Adult B’nai Mitzvah class of 2003, and she traveled to Israel with Beth El’s first congregational trip in 2009.

1st VP: Dan Magid
Dan has been a member of Beth El since 1967. He became Bar Mitzvah and was married at Beth El. He and his wife Robinn have four children: Josh, 17, Beth, 14, Aaron, 12, and Nathan, almost 7, who have done some combination of Nursery School, Religious School, Bat Mitzvah, Confirmation, Midrasha, and KEE TOV. Dan was the President and CEO of Aldon (a software company co-founded by his Dad in 1979), until he sold the business last year. Dan helped establish the Shabbat morning minyan, and attends Torah study and services weekly. He has developed and printed several of the prayer books that have been used for Shabbat, High Holidays, and the Minyan services. He was on the last Rabbi Search Committee. For a break, Dan spends time with the kids, reads/studies, bikes, hikes, listens to music, and goes to the movies.

VP Fundraising: Leyna Bernstein
Leyna, a planning & search consultant, has been a Beth El member for 4 years.

Leyna and her husband Brian are Albany residents and active members of the Beth El community, Son Eli is 11 and is looking forward to his 4th summer at Camp Kee Tow. Leyna has been consulting with nonprofit organizations since 1996. From 1997 - 2008, she held senior staff positions at Bay Area nonprofit support centers, where she managed consulting and program development for a broad range of nonprofit leaders and organizations.

VP Personnel: Marjorie Gelb
Marjorie is a mediator and retired attorney. She has been a member of Beth El for 31 years.

She worked as an employment lawyer and a government lawyer for over 30 years. She served on the Personnel Committee at Beth El many years ago. Her grown children are Josie and Molly Aaronson-Gelb. Mark and Marjorie have a new grandbaby, Naomi, who lives in Chicago.

Recording Secretary: Marv Pearlstein
Marv is an attorney who has been a member for 9 years.

He practices law with the firm of Manatt, Phelps & Phillips in San Francisco with a focus on real estate and financial services (they were Steefel, Levitt & Weiss until they merged into Manatt last year). He is the father of a 14 year old who was Bar Mitzvah’d and graduated from religious school at Beth El last year, and who is now participating in Midrasha at Beth El. Marv has sat on several other nonprofit boards, and currently is also on the Bentley School Board of Trustees. Prior to law school he lived in Israel for 2 years and led tour groups of American high school students to Israel.

VP Membership: Nancy Turak
Nancy is a health care consultant and has been a member of Beth El about 20 years. Nancy has found a home at Beth El and wants all members to be able to say that. She hopes you’ll work with her to recruit new members and keep our current ‘family’ together.

Treasurer: Stan Schiffman
Stan is a retired health care executive, as well as a former Enrolled Agent with the IRS. His grandfather, Nathan Seitzick, helped establish Beth El. He was a Bar Mitzvah, and Miriam and he were married in Beth El. They have lived in New York, Baltimore, and Pittsburgh, and have two children who live out of state. No grandchildren (yet). They live in Alameda, and scull, hike, and attend cultural events. Miriam and Stan joined Beth El two years ago and are taking advantage of Beth El’s various opportunities to learn about our wonderful history and religion which we used to take for granted.

Immediate Past President: Katherine Haynes Sanstad
Katherine Haynes Sanstad came to Beth El in 2001 and she and her husband Alan have two sons, age 10 and 15. Aaron is in religious school, Isaac was bar mitzvah in 2007, and both have been avid Kee Tow campers. She chaired the Religious School Committee, the Rabbi Search Committee, served as First Vice President and President of the Congregation. She and her family have enjoyed participating in the Generation to Generation Hug and in hosting fellow congregants during the secret sukkah tour. Her professional background is in marketing and public health, health and health care research and strategy development. She is currently Executive Director of Diversity for Northern CA Kaiser Permanente.

VP Program Council Chair: Lisa Cain
Lisa owns PagePoint Web Solutions. She has been a member of Beth El 9.5 years.

Lisa Cain and her family joined Congregation Beth El when they moved here from Philadelphia, PA. Lisa and her husband, Aaron Gobler, have been very involved in Nursery School and Religious School committees over the years. Their two daughters, Emma and Jolie are both graduate of the Nursery School and long-time attendees of Camp Kee Tow and Religious School.

House: Alex Bergrau
Alex and his wife, Michelle, have been members for 19 years. They have 2 boys, Asher, 14, and Ruben, 9, and Michelle’s mom, Piera, lives right next to them in grand Italian tradition. Asher and Ruben have both been through Nursery School, active in Kee Tow in the summers that they’re not in Italy, and they both attend Religious School, with Asher just completing his Bar Mitzvah last Spring with a very proud family around him. He has been really enjoying his first year of Midrasha this year. Alex and Michelle work together in their architectural studio with Michelle using her MBA to keep the business side afloat. Alex has been on and off the Board for the past seven presidencies as House Chair while working from the ground up, literally and metaphysically, on the new synagogue project, from land acquisition through move in and can now be seen regularly working on lighting, acoustic and color projects that he’s fairly sure will keep him and his committee occupied through the next Millennium.
Creating sacred space together is what Alex believes is our community’s calling as a “kehilla kedosha” and he’s especially pleased that his sons are of an age that they understand and appreciate this process of “being built together”.

**Director at Large: Harris Cohn**

Harris is an Analyst, at Pacific Gas and Electric Company. He has been a member of Beth El for 22 years, since birth.

Thus, he has been in the Beth El family for as long as he can remember, and he is excited by the chance to contribute to our community.

**Director at Large: Marc Derewetzky**

Marc, a lawyer, is a partner at Morison Ansa. He and Jennifer have two children, India and Paisley, in religious school.

**Director at Large: Lori Perlstadt**

Lori is senior vice president and general manager of M-Squared, a financial services practice. She has been a Beth El member for 3 years, is serving on the Executive Director Search Committee. Her son Elijah is in first grade at the religious school, and her daughter Ruby is in the Alef class of the nursery school.

**Adult Ed: Jonathan Simon**

Jonathan is a professor at UC Berkeley and has been a member of Beth El since 2003.

Jonathan is inspired by the intellectual, spiritual and ethical depth of Judaism. He is drawn to Beth El by its learned congregation, its strong social justice sensibilities, and its thriving diversity.

**Camp Kee Tov: Paula Lasky Price**

Paula is a Clinician at San Francisco VA Medical Center in Cardiothoracic Surgery, and Planned Parenthood, Richmond. She has been a member of Beth El for 7 years.

Paula’s and Erik’s 2 children, Ben, 11, and Sasha, 13, have attended Camp Kee Tov both sessions of every summer since they were in Rishonim. The camp has been an integral part of their childhood experience and has provided them with fantastic, lifelong friends.

**Jewish Community and Israeli Relations Co-chair: Thom Seaton**

Thom Seaton, co-chair of Israel Committee, joined Beth El in 1977 and served as President of the Board from 1991-1993. He is married to Betty Seaton, has two children, Jonathan and Phoebe, and practices law in Walnut Creek.

**Library: Scott Spear**

Scott, criminal defense lawyer, has been a Beth El member for 27 years. His and Ruth’s children, Juliet and Mark, grew up at Beth El.

**Men’s Club: Joe Schlessinger**

Joe is retired from Engineering; currently teaching high school math. He has been a member of Beth El for 30 years.

Joe retired recently from Silicon Valley (10 start-ups) to return to teaching, his first profession. He and his wife Elisabeth have three adult children, one of whom is finally getting married.

**Mitzvah: Lauren Ganes**

Lauren is a retired teacher. She has been a member of Beth El for 27 years. Over the past 27 years, as a member of Congregation Beth El, she has served on the Nursery School Committee, the Camp Kee Tov Committee, and shopped for the Homeless Meal. She is currently the Chair of the Mitzvah Committee.

**Religious School: Alison Bernstein**

Alison, a lawyer, grew up at Beth El and was bat mitzvah here. She and Judith have two children, Kobi and Talia, in religious school.

**Ritual: Robinn Magid**

Robinn is a retired management consultant, now homemaker with four kids ages 7 through 17. An active Beth El member since 1991, she is completing her first year as Ritual Committee Chair and looks forward to continuing to help the synagogue care for our ritual objects, manage our religious events, and discuss and implement ritual policy. She also co-manages the Gift Shop with Odette Blackman.

**Social Action co-chairs: Wilma P. K. Rader**

Wilma is an attorney doing Labor-Management Arbitration/Mediation/ FACT Finding. She was a member of Beth El from about 1971-86. She served on the Board and the Executive Committee (Secty), Active on the Kee Tov, Adult Education, and Social Action committees. She was instrumental in Beth El’s joining the East Bay Sanctuary Coalition to protect refugees (at that time primarily from Central America) and help them get asylum.

She rejoined in 2005 or 2006 and thoroughly enjoys the early morning minyan and Torah Study, and her return to the Social Action Committee. Her three children were bar/bat mitzvah at Beth El, and Jenn is a member now (when she’s not on sabbatical in Mexico).

Her hobbies include reading, hiking, sailing, theater-going, enjoying art museums and galleries, listening to classical and Jazz music, spending time with family and friends.

**Social Action co-chair Maxim Schrogin**

Maxim is a real estate syndicator; has been a member 15 years or so; current spiritual practices are Yoga, cycling, and working with community organizations.

*Thank you to Scott Spear (Nominating Committee Co-chair) for compiling these bios.*

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### Beth El is going greener!

What a great time to practice TIKKUN OLAM and look for ways we can all live more lightly on our home, the Earth.

- Reducing waste is our job as Shomrei Adomah, Keepers of the Earth. It is also a way for us to act on our values in daily life, work together to make change, and even save money!

- Coming soon you will see new, green changes around Beth El popping up like Spring flowers.

- Keep your eyes out for our new temple wide systems such as:
  - Recycling Paper and Cardboard
  - Composting Food Scraps, Paper Cups and Plates, and Utensils!
  - Keeping garbage minimal and separate.

- These changes will depend on everyone participating.
  - It all begins in mid-May!

- If you have ideas, suggestions, or questions, contact: Lom Friedman, Operations Director at lom@bethelberkeley.org

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**Contact:**

Lom Friedman, Operations Director

at lom@bethelberkeley.org

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**Reducing waste is our job as Shomrei Adamah, Keepers of the Earth. It is also a way for us to act on our values in daily life, work together to make change, and even save money!**

**These changes will depend on everyone participating.**

- It all begins in mid-May!

If you have ideas, suggestions, or questions, contact:

Lom Friedman, Operations Director at lom@bethelberkeley.org
RECOMMENDATION OF SCHOOL
BEING JEWISH YEAR-ROUND

As the school year comes to a close, we still have much to look forward to around the religious school. May is the time of year when we wrap up our formal education for the year, but truly dive into the informal Jewish educational opportunities. I invite you to think of the summer not as time ‘off’ but much more as Jewish time ‘on.’ With the longer days, I hope you have time to experience the wonders of nature with your children, and to discuss creation. A simple afternoon outdoors can reveal so many marvels of our world, and discovering them with your children can lead to amazing conversations about God, creation and the world around us.

Summer also is camp time, and hopefully your children will have an opportunity to attend Camp Kee Tov or other Jewish day/residential camps. Living Judaism at camp has been concluded to be one of the most effective ways of creating life-long Jewish learners. At Jewish camp, our children are learning not only Jewish songs and making Jewish friends, but they are seeing the world through Jewish lenses. We are helping to nurture their positive Jewish identity through these informal experiences by infusing their days with learning and creativity in a Jewish environment.

Our planning for next year’s school schedule is in full swing. Through a partnership between the parents and the school, we have created a new schedule for the upcoming year. We are inviting parents to become teachers in our Religious School—either midweek or in our family Shabbat program. No prior teaching needed, only a love of Judaism and for being with children. If you are interested in applying, please contact me at Debra@bethelberkeley.org.

I am confident that next year’s Religious School program will offer dynamic opportunities for learning for every member of the family. All the details of our program can be found on the Beth El Religious School website as well as in our registration materials which you will be receiving shortly in the mail. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly so that we can find a good solution for your family.

I look forward to continuing to be a part of the Beth El family and to get to know you as we grow. My door is always open and I’m eager to hear your input!

Wishing you a summer filled with learning and exploration!

-Debra Sagan Massey
Director of Education

From the Rabbi (continued from front page)
We have been around, according to tradition, for five thousand six hundred and sixty-nine years and in Berkeley for more than sixty-five. I have complete confidence that Beth El will be here for generations to come. Because we take the long-view, we are able to schedule bar/bat mitzvahs, weddings and programs out into the future…and we do. If you are anticipating a life-cycle event and it is not yet on our calendar, please call and make an appointment so that we can plan to be with you at life’s most significant moments. Join us for study, celebration, worship and community.

The Talmud teaches: kol yisrael areivim zeh bazeh. We are responsible for one another. In these recent months, Beth El, our members and I personally have been sustained and helped by rabbinic colleagues near and far, by our national synagogue organization, the Union for Reform Judaism and my Reform colleagues in the Central Conference of American Rabbis, by the East Bay Jewish Community Federation and its agencies, by Jewish Family and Children’s Service and by an outpouring of encouragement and support from our staff and many members and friends of our diverse congregational community. Now, more than ever, we welcome your assistance and participation—and encourage you to let us know how our synagogue community can help you.

L’shalom

Rabbi Yoel Kahn
“Complete the Sanctuary”
By Rosh Hashanah 5770

This fall we have set a goal to finish our sanctuary by the time we all gather here again for the High Holy Days. To help Beth El meet its current financial needs, and allow us to fully realize our plans for our new home, we are asking all of our members to contribute to our “Complete the Sanctuary Campaign”.

We gratefully acknowledge these recent donors to the campaign:

Alan & Paula Statman
Alfred & Anita Cotton
Alisa Einwohner
Andrew & Nancy Wallach
Angela Botelho & Barry Silverblatt
Barbara Morgan
Barry Levine
Bill & Emily Marthinsen
Bob Brandon & Barbara Fierer
Bruce & Susan Carter
Catherine Tzur
Clarke & Maria Daniels
Diane & Ed Bernbaum
Ellen Goldstein
Gil Friend
Harry & Marilyn Margulis
Jeffrey & Susan Brand
Jerry Iserson
Jerry Weintraub
Joel & Rochelle Blumenfeld
John & Florence Lewis
John Kosecoff
Josh & Beryl Bar-Lev
Judith & Gerson Goldhaber
Laurie Juengert
Laurie Swiadon
Linda Gerson
Lloyd Morgan
Mark & Estie Hudes
Mark Aaronson & Margie Gelb
March
Marilyn Margulius
Moshe Maler & Susan Frankel
Nasrine Greene
Norman Postone & Lisa Fruchtman
Norman Schneider & Cecile Isaacs
Robert & Elizabeth Sharf
Rochelle & Jeff Halperin
Ruth Guthartz
Sam & Vivian Trotz
Scott & Ruth Spear
Stanley & Miriam Schiffman
Stephen & Wilma Rader
Stu & Judy Berman
Tamar Meidav & Wil Burns
Vivian Clayton

FROM THE GIFT SHOP

The Andreas Meyer Company, once known as Nahariya Glass, located in the western Galilee, has been developing, designing, and manufacturing beautiful handmade fused glass for forty years. Their teams of skilled glass designers made high quality, useful serving dishes in beautiful designs, fade-proof, and dishwasher safe. We just received word that the company is closing its doors and liquidating its present stock. We have sold some of their lovely bowls and trays in the past, and we ordered a number of pieces at this time with the thought that any of them would make a lovely wedding, anniversary, or housewarming present. There will soon be no more of these unique pieces from this company. Come see what we have.

We continue to feature other home accessories made in Israel that are appropriate gifts for Jewish or non-Jewish recipients. May and June are typically celebration months: confirmations, Mother’s Day, weddings and B’nai Mitzvahs. With our good selection of ritual objects, our renowned jewelry, our body products from the Dead Sea (Ahava), children’s games and puzzles, we think we can suggest a gift for most ages and most occasions.

Our Gift Shop hours correspond to Beth El business hours. When a volunteer is not available, our excellent office staff can handle sales. For information or personal service, feel free to call Odette at 526-4917.

Odette and Robinn (Odette Blachman - oblachman@sbcglobal.net)
New Books
In the Library

Donations to the Plisner and Vida Funds make it possible to get
new books for the children’s and adult libraries. Some newly-
arrived adult books are mentioned here, but there is not enough
room here to tell about all the new books.

By sheer chance, all the books listed this time are history, from
bagels to ostrich feathers.

The Bagel: The Surprising History of a Modest Bread, by Maria
Balinska, tells the story of the modest bread from its invention
till now, weaving the story through events of our history, from
pogroms in Poland to the Lower East Side, the Bagel Bakers’
Local 338 Union and its demise at the hands of the machine, and
the histories of the British and Canadian Bagels.

In How Jewish is Jewish History?, Moshe Rosman, professor of
Jewish history at Bar-Ilan University, analyzes the challenges
facing Jewish historiography in the wake of postmodernism. One
key event in instigating this book was a gathering in Berkeley of
the contributors to Cultures of the Jews, under the leadership of
David Biale.

Israel’s Occupation, by Neve Gordon of Ben Gurion University,
is the first complete history of Israel’s occupation of the West
Bank and Gaza. This book is very useful for understanding
current events there. Yinon Cohen says it is “written with a
golden pen.”

Making Jews Modern: The Yiddish and Ladino Press in the
Russian and Ottoman Empires, by Sarah Abrevaya Stein, won
Jewish book prizes. This is a history of how the Jewish press in
the empires brought their Jewish subjects into the modern world,
including the role of advertising. Emil Draitser writes a memoir in Shush! — Growing Up Jewish under Stalin of post-Holocaust life in Odessa, where keeping
your mouth shut was a major survival skill but where the life of
working-class Jews was enriched by their culture and family life.

The Arts of Intimacy: Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the
Making of Castilian Culture, by Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, is
a lavishly illustrated history of Cordoba, Seville, and especially
Toledo, in the 11th to 14th centuries, when there was diversity
with confrontation, interaction, and unity of Hebrew and Arabic
cultures. This is a beautiful book.

Mountain Jews, published by the Israel Museum in Jerusalem,
tells of the history and culture of the Jews of Azerbaijan, an
ancient community, probably descending from the Babylonian
Exile. (One of their rabbis appears in the Jerusalem Talmud.) As
expected with a museum publication, it has lots of pictures.

In the 19th century and up to 1914, every woman with the
wherewithal, in Europe and the Americas, required a steady
supply of ostrich feathers. This strongly felt need was satisfied
by a worldwide business that was almost wholly controlled and
staffed by Jews, from top to bottom—Sephardic, Ashkenazi,
Yemenite, African, ultra-orthodox and secular, etc.—referred to
then as the “Jewish ostrich feather mafia.” The colorful story of
this global enterprise, which entailed, for instance, smuggling
Barbary ostriches from Sudan through Timbuktu to South Africa,
is told in Plumes: Ostrich Feathers, Jews, and a Lost World of
Global Commerce, by Sarah Abrevaya Stein.

-Scott Spear
Library Chair

LICHVOD HATZIBUR
DINNERS

LICHVOD HATZIBUR
“For the Honor of the Community”
Come enjoy a lovely dinner cooked
especially for you in the company of
fellow members of Beth El.
Saturday, May 16, 2009
6:00pm
Party begins at Beth El with wine,
hor d’oeuvres, and havdalah.
From there, we will leave for our
different destination dinners
hosted by Beth El members.

To help our synagogue meet the spiritual,
educational and cultural needs of the Beth El
community we ask that you make a donation to
Beth El’s General Fund.

REGISTER TODAY AT:
WWW.BETHELBERKELEY.ORG
MEMBER CORNER

B’NAI MITZVAH

The congregation congratulates Joseph Zicherman & Ginny Roemer on the recent Bar Mitzvah of their son Nathan on Saturday, May 2, 2009. Mazel Tov!

The congregation is cordially invited to attend as our daughter, Allison Lukas is called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, May 9, 2009, at 10:15am. Kiddush will follow. Brian & Wendy Lukas

The congregation is cordially invited to attend as our son, Max Levenson is called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on Saturday, May 30, 2009, at 10:15am. Kiddush will follow. Leo & Rebecca Levenson

The congregation is cordially invited to attend as Neil Gozan honors the 50th anniversary of being called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on Saturday, May 16, 2009, at 10:15am. Mazel Tov!

The congregation is cordially invited to attend as our son, Eugene Heimann is called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on Saturday, June 27, 2009, at 10:15am. Kiddush will follow. Philip Heimann & Luoping Zhang

The congregation is cordially invited to attend as our daughter, Case Lapidus is called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, June 6, 2009, at 10:15am. Kiddush will follow. Cary & Denise Lapidus

The congregation is cordially invited to attend as our daughter, Tal Garner is called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, June 20, 2009, at 10:15am. Kiddush will follow. David & Nurit Garner

The congregation is cordially invited to attend as our daughter, Casey Lapidus is called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, June 6, 2009, at 10:15am. Kiddush will follow. Cary & Denise Lapidus

Welcome to our new members:

Hilary Foster & Christian Geckeler
Jonathan Frisch
Josh & Kayko Hesslein
Johnette Jauron & Jeffrey Laurence
David Kesler
Judith & John Malamut
David Matson & Lesley Bonnet
Caroline Papas & Josh Leach
Deborah Silver-Ezekiel & Daniel Ezekiel

The congregation is cordially invited to attend as our daughter, Casey Lapidus is called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, June 6, 2009, at 10:15am. Kiddush will follow. Cary & Denise Lapidus
TZEDAKAH

AARON PLISHNER LIBRARY FUND
Phyllis Zisman in memory of her mother, Dorothy Scherr Wollins

BLACHMAN EMERGENCY FUND
Barbara Blachman in memory of Lucy Bigio
Nancy Turak & Marc Davis in memory of Bob Fischer
Odette Blachman in memory of Lucy Bigio
Pearl Wolffs in memory of Lucy Bigio

BUILDING FUND
Mona Cain

CAMP KEE TOV FUND
Bonnie Weiss in memory of her mother Bettye R. Lieberfarb

DAVID SOL COTTON MEMORIAL SWIG FUND
Alfred & Anita Cotton in memory of David Sol Cotton

GENERAL FUND
Grossberg Abrams Foundation
Maria Barzoloski
Vivian Clayton
Fran Alexander in honor of Jacob and Lorenzo Giamartino-Springer being called to the Torah as B’Nai Mitzvot
Henry & Mary Hoexter in memory of Ilse Marx
Hillary & Jonathan Reinis in honor of Aaron Magid being called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah
Julie & Patrick Kennedy in honor of Adrienne Sontag-Murphy being called to the Torah as Bat Mitzvah
Julie & Patrick Kennedy in honor of the aufruf of Marlene Getz and Bob Gilden
Louis & Nathan Jacobson in loving memory of Selma Jacobson
Marcel & Margrit Schurman in memory of Marcel’s brother, Rafael Kafka
Nancy Gordon & Ken Kirsch in loving memory of Nancy’s mother, Doris Gordon
The Frasier/Kolligs Family in appreciation of Bon Singer
Pearl Wolffs in memory of Leona Shapiro, aunt of Johanna Mandel

RUTH FISCHER DISCRETIONARY FUND
Odette Blachman in memory of Bob Fischer

HOMELESS MEAL PROGRAM
Clarke & Maria Daniels
Ilan Roth
Stephen & Wilma Rader
Rebecca & Robert Tracy
The Episcopal Church in the Diocese of California
Ellen & Barry Hecht in memory of Ellen’s mother, Anne Dreyfuss

Jahangir & Vadjijehe Yadegar in memory of Sinoor Yadegar
Jahangir & Vadjijehe Yadegar in memory of Bibijan Yadegar
Jahangir & Vadjijehe Yadegar in memory of Ashraf Kashfi Benlevi
Jahangir & Vadjijehe Yadegar in memory of Nosrat Yadegar
Judith & David Tabb in memory of Judith’s mother, Dianne Silverman
Sandy Curtis in honor of Aaron Magid being called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah

MARIAN MAGID FUND
Florence & Morris Pripstein in honor of Aaron Magid being called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah

NURSERY SCHOOL FUND
Carol Suveda
Grossberg Abrams Foundation

ONEG/KIDDISH FUND
Steven Joseph & Corey Hansen-Joseph in memory of Steven’s mother, Belle Rosenstein Joseph

RABBI YOEL KAHN’S DISCRETIONARY FUND
Bob Brandfon & Barbara Fierer in memory of Bob’s father, Jacob Brandfon
Bob Brandfon & Barbara Fierer in honor of Rabbi Kahn
Ilene Yasemsky in honor of Benjamin Yasemsky being called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah
Julie Friend in appreciation of Rabbi Kahn
Steven Joseph & Corey Hansen-Joseph
The Frasier/Kolligs Family in honor of Benjamin Kolligs being called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah
Vivian and Sandy Golden in appreciation of Rabbi Kahn leading the Israel trip

RABBI VIDA LIBRARY FUND
Scott & Ruth Spear in honor of Katherine Haynes Sanstad
Camp Kee Tov

Parent Night
May 31st • 5:00-7:00 pm

Bring your prospective campers to play camp games with Kee Tov counselors. Learn about the various programs Kee Tov offers and have your questions answered. This is a great opportunity for new camp families and prospective camp families to learn about what makes Camp Kee Tov so great.

For more information, please contact campkeetov@bethelberkeley.org

TORAH STUDY
Meets Saturday, Shabbat Morning in the Chapel/Beit Midrash at 9:15am

May 9, 2009
Led by Stu Berman

May 16, 2009
Led by Neil Gozan

May 23, 2009
Story of Ruth
Led by Joel Marsh

May 30, 2009
Shavuot
Led by Diane Bernbaum

June 6, 2009
Parashat Nasso - Numbers 4:21-7:89
Led by Stan Schiffman

June 13, 2009
Parashat Beha’alotcha - Numbers 8:1-12:16
Led by Debra Sagan Massey

June 20, 2009
Led by Rabbi Yoel Kahn

June 27, 2009
Parashat Korach - Numbers 16:1-18:32
Led by Nancy Turak

Working at Camp Kee Tov

The Camp Kee Tov staff is a family of ninety enthusiastic and talented young men and women dedicated to a common goal of providing a safe, fun, creative, Jewish Day Camp experience for over 700 campers between the ages of 5 and 17. Camp Kee Tov’s diverse staff enjoy Jewish culture and share a love for, and a commitment to, caring for children, hard work, and excellent programming. Over the summer staff also develop their own skills as leaders, educators, mentors and programmers.

Camp Kee Tov staff commit to working two four week sessions (June 22nd – July 17th and July 27 – August 21), and a week-long staff training retreat (June 14th – June 18th). The Camp Kee Tov work day starts at 8:00am and ends at 5:00pm, Monday - Friday.

There are a few openings left for these positions:
Senior Counselor: Must be at least 18 years old and/or have 2 years of camp staff or related experience.
Junior Counselor: Must be at least 16 years old and have at least one year of camp staff or Counselor-in-Training experience.
Chaverim Aide (Day Care): Must be entering 10th grade in September 2009.

This extended care program for campers helps working parents by matching their 9-5 work schedule. Detailed descriptions of these positions are found at www.campkeetov.org.
NOW is the time for Water and Energy Saving Solutions!

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Everyonr is invited!

**Family Friendly Shabbat Service**

**Friday, May 15 at 6:00pm**

All families with children of any age are welcome to attend. We will begin with a vegetarian potluck at 6:00, and move into t’fillot (services) at 7:00pm. In addition to the ‘regular’ highlights, this evening will feature a gallery of our students’ work. Many classes are working on culminating projects, and we will have them on display in our school wing. In addition, we will also have members of our Religious School Committee available during the Oneg to answer questions about next year’s program. We will honor our teachers and celebrate our students. Please plan on coming!!

Potluck assignments are as follows, according to the first letter of your LAST NAME:
- A-F: Salads, sides, vegetables
- G-S: Main dish- pasta, rice, quinoa, pizza, etc.
- T-Z: Fruit

We will have dessert at our Oneg following t’fillot.

Beth El’s property with help from the Garden Committee. He delicately pruned trees away from our building’s gutters, took weight of the limb of a beautiful bay tree, and was a wealth of information for anyone who had questions about the health and welfare of trees. He also volunteered to scamper across our roof, freeing a variety of children’s balls while cleaning the gutters. The Garden Committee appreciates Ken’s work.

- Caroline Leiman for leading the purim hamentaschen baking.
- Dan & Robinn Magid for bringing Beth El into the Wi Fi age.
- Robinn Magid for organizing the Megilla reading.
- Moshe Maler for improving our computer networking system.
- Sue Reinhold for co-ordinating the logistics for Aviva Zornberg’s visit.
- All our hardworking, creative and dedicated committee members.

**MEN’S CLUB EVENTS**

**MONDAY, JUNE 22 • 7:05pm**

**DAY AT THE A’s**

**A’s v. GIANTS**

**ALL TICKETS $10.00**

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annambob@pacbell.net or 548-0720
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FROM MIDRASHA IN BERKELEY

It’s coming. My favorite day of the Midrasha year….graduation. No, it’s not my favorite day because it marks the end of the school year and I can finally sleep a little later or go to a ball game or have guests for brunch on Sundays. It my favorite because when I hear each graduate speak about what Midrasha and their 18 years of Jewish education have meant to them, I am overwhelmed with pride and have absolutely not a worry in the world about “Jewish continuity.” All the early mornings, late nights, long work days, and worry about program details, all go out the window and I realize that I have chosen the right profession and the right job. If you’d like to be similarly filled with nachas (You don’t have to be the school director or be related to Midrasha in any way to take pride in these kids. Just living in our community will do!), please join us for graduation. It is Sunday, May 17 at 10:45 am. in the Congregation Beth El sanctuary, 1301 Oxford Street in Berkeley. The graduation epitomizes the pluralistic nature of our Midrasha community. We have 15 graduates. They come from 8 different synagogues. We are truly a community school.

Mazel tov to the following students and their families: Alina Alishoev, Ilana Cohen, Megan Collins, Becky Fitch, Matthew Grist, Avihai Guzy, Owen Hall, Joshua Magid, Lindsay Martien, Aidan Meyer, Adele Moss, Tsipora Prochovnick, Marsha Rosenblatt, Ruth Rosenblatt, and Emma Stone

See you on May 17th at 10:45 am at graduation.

-Diane Bernbaum
Director

CONGREGATION BETH EL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR POSITION

Congregation Beth El’s Executive Director Search Committee is now accepting applications for the position of Executive Director. This is a full time, benefitted position reporting to the Board of Directors. A full position description is located at www.bethelberkeley.org. Review of applications will begin May 27, 2009. Based on qualifications and experience, the salary range is $70-80k. Written applications should be sent to edsearch@bethelberkeley.org and include a cover letter explaining qualifications, a resume with employment dates and responsibilities, and the names of three references (references will not be contacted without first alerting the applicant).
It is a Jewish tradition to give contributions to commemorate life cycle events and other occasions. Are you celebrating a birthday, engagement, anniversary, baby naming, Bat/Bar Mitzvah or a recovery from illness? These are just a few ideas of appropriate times to commemorate with a donation to Beth El. These tax-deductible donations are greatly appreciated and are a vital financial supplement to support the wonderful variety of programs and activities that we offer at Congregation Beth El. Thank you for your support.

**CONGREGATION BETH EL Fund Contributions**

This contribution of $_________ is □ in Memory of* □ in Honor of*

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Thank you for your generosity. Please make checks payable to Congregation Beth El and mail to 1301 Oxford Street, Berkeley, CA 94709

The Builder is now electronic!

Members will be able to view and download their Builder from the e-update and website. Print copies will be available for pick up at Beth El or upon request. To request your copy of the Builder be mailed to you, please complete the form below and mail to:

**Congregation Beth El - Builder Mail Request**

1301 Oxford Street - Berkeley, CA 94709

You may also respond by emailing builder@bethelberkeley.org with “Please send my Builder by mail” in the Subject line or calling the Beth El main office at 510.848.3988.

☐ YES! /We would like to continue to receive the Builder in the mail.

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## May 2009 / Iyar - Sivan 5769

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<td>Mother’s Day 6:35p Lehrhaus/ Int. PrBk Hebrew 8:00p Lehrhaus/ Adv. Bib. Hebrew</td>
<td>9:30a Playgroup for Infants and Parents 7:00p NS Committee Meeting 7:15p Ritual Committee Meeting 8:00p RS Committee Meeting</td>
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<td>6:00p Family Friendly Shabbat Potluck 7:00p Family Friendly Shabbat Service</td>
<td>8:30a Early Minyan 9:15a Torah Study 10:15a Shabbat Morning Service Bar Mitzvah Neil Gozan 7:00p Sababa Youth Group Event</td>
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Congregation Beth El
1301 Oxford St • Berkeley, CA 94709-1424

Main Phone Number (510) 848-3988 *** Fax (510) 848-2707
Religious School Office Direct Line (510) 848-2122
Nursery School Office Direct Line (510) 848-9428
Camp Kee Tov Office Direct Line (510) 848-2372
Midrasha Direct Line (510) 843-4667

Clergy & Staff Ext. Direct Line Email Address
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Suzanne Alexander, Accounting 210 suzanne@bethelberkeley.org
Diane Bernbaum, Midrasha Director 236 843-4667 diane@midrasha.org
Odette Blachman, Gift Shop 240 oblachman@sbcglobal.net
Gabriela Crane, Admin. Coordinator 235 gabriela@bethelberkeley.org
Rebecca DePalma, RS Admin. Coordinator ** 214 848-2122 rebecca@bethelberkeley.org
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Ann Gonski, Executive Director 212 ED@bethelberkeley.org
Lom Friedman, Facilities 218 lom@bethelberkeley.org
Barbara Kanter, Nursery School Director 219 848-9428 barbara@bethelberkeley.org
Lenora O’Keith, Main Office 211 lenora@bethelberkeley.org
Charlie Radin, Admin. Coordinator 235 charlie@bethelberkeley.org
Rabbi Ferenc Raj, Rabbi Emeritus ferenc@bethelberkeley.org
Debra Sagan Massey, Director of Education 213 848-2122 debra@bethelberkeley.org
Bon Singer, Cantorial Soloist 216 bon@bethelberkeley.org

**For appointments with Bon Singer, please contact Rebecca DePalma

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<td></td>
<td>6:15p Shabbat Evening Service</td>
<td>8:30a Early Minyan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10:00a Annual Meeting</td>
<td>5:00p Lehrhaus/ Golden Age of Tutankhamun</td>
<td>7:15p Conversational Yiddish</td>
<td>6:15p Shabbat Evening Service</td>
<td>Bat Mitzvah</td>
<td>Casey Lapidus</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8:00p Lehrhaus/ Adv. Bib. Hebrew</td>
<td>6:00p Lehrhaus/ Golden Age of Tutankhamun</td>
<td>5:00p Lehrhaus/ Golden Age of Tutankhamun</td>
<td>6:15p Shabbat Evening Service</td>
<td>Bat Mitzvah</td>
<td>Tal Garner</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6:00p Lehrhaus/ Golden Age of Tutankhamun</td>
<td>5:00p Lehrhaus/ Golden Age of Tutankhamun</td>
<td>6:35p Lehrhaus/ Int. PrBk Hebrew</td>
<td>6:15p Shabbat Evening Service</td>
<td>3:00p Camp Kee Tov Session I Orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPLY FOR CAMP KEE TOV SUMMER 2009

It’s not too late! Spaces are still available in most programs!

Session I: June 22nd – July 17th
Session II: July 27th – August 21st

Exploration Camp One: July 6th – July 17th
Exploration Camp Two: August 10th – August 21st

Register now at www.campkeetov.org!
Come join us this summer; we can’t wait to see you there!

For more information or to register, please contact Charlie Radin at 510.848.2372 x225, charlie@bethelberkeley.org or visit www.campkeetov.org