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Congregation Beth Hamedresh – Beth Israel

BULLETIN

Editor: Stan Schaffer

January President's Message

Friends,

Well, it is farewell to 2011, and welcome to 2012! Of course, this is just the passing of the secular year, of no particular significance in the Jewish calendar. Yet in compliance with the commandment to be happy and joyful, that is no reason to miss a good party! In Israel, where Christmas for most people is just another day of work, the eve of December 31 is celebrated (unofficially of course) as “Sylvester”, since December 31 is Saint Sylvester’s Day (Pope Sylvester I, who served as Pope from 314 to 335). Why it is preferable to celebrate New Year’s Eve as a Catholic Saint’s day, rather than a secular New Year’s day, I am not sure, but so it goes!

At BHBI, we ushered out 2011 with our annual Chanukah Party, held again this year with our friends from Beth Am. A crowd of about 30 people filled the sanctuary to light the candles, sing songs, and enjoy a delicious holiday dinner. Our new reigning dreidel champ is Nina Klionsky, who dethroned long time champion Ami Shmerl. Thanks to Judith Mercer, Paula Bob, and Esther Vogelstein who helped with the cooking. Thanks to Janet Grable for the beautiful and tasty menorah cake. Thanks to Leon for the shopping and the challenging trivia quiz (I never knew Leon could be so trivial!). Thanks to Aaron Marsh and Ami Schmerl of Beth Am for helping to set up, and thanks to the Nelsons from Beth Am for the delicious sufganiot. Thanks to everyone who helped serve or clean up, and most of all thanks to everyone who came to share in the singing, eating, and for making a good time all around!

See you in shul,

Steve Teitel



BHBI CALENDAR OF EVENTS – JANUARY 2012

Sunday	Jan 1	9:00 AM	Service, Breakfast and Discussion
Friday	Jan 6	7:00 PM	Shabbat Evening Service at Heather Heights in Pittsford Light candles at 4:31 PM
Saturday	Jan 7	9:30 AM	Shabbat Morning Service Torah: Vayechi
Sunday	Jan 8	9:00 AM	Service, Breakfast and Discussion
Monday	Jan 9	7:30 PM	Monthly Meeting of the BHBI Board of Trustees
Wednesday	Jan 11	7:30 PM	Small Conservative Shul Collaborative Torah Study Session at BHBI
Friday	Jan 13	8:00 PM	Joint Shabbat Evening Service with Temple Beth Am at Beth Am Light candles at 4:39 PM
Saturday	Jan 14	9:30 AM	Joint Shabbat Morning Service with Temple Beth Am at BHBI Torah: Shemot
Sunday	Jan 15	9:00 AM	Service, Breakfast and Discussion
Friday	Jan 20	8:00 PM	Shabbat Evening Service Light candles at 4:47 PM
Saturday	Jan 21	9:30 AM	Shabbat Morning Service Torah: Vaeirah. Blessing of the New Month.
Sunday	Jan 22	9:00 AM	Service, Breakfast and Discussion
Friday	Jan 27	8:00 PM	Shabbat Evening Service Light candles at 4:57 PM
Saturday	Jan 28	9:30 AM	Shabbat Morning Service Torah: Bo
Sunday	Jan 29	9:00 AM	Service, Breakfast and Discussion.

DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO IS UNAFFILIATED AND INTERESTED IN JOINING A CONGREGATION?

Let them know about BHBI's special free 3 month trial membership (available to prospective first-time new members only). Have them contact BHBI at 244-2060 or BHBI@frontiernet.net and we will be happy to give them information about BHBI and this great offer!!

GOODSEARCH.COM

Goodsearch.com is an on-line internet search program that pays non-profit organizations like BHBI a fee every time someone uses their search service. Go to www.goodsearch.com, enter the search term that you want and put in BHBI on the line where it says Who Do You Goodsearch For? BHBI will benefit from each search you make!

MAKE PURCHASES AT AMAZON.COM AT SUPPORT BHBI AT THE SAME TIME!

Why not contribute to BHBI while making on-line purchases? It's easy to purchase gifts on-line at Amazon.com and support BHBI financially at the same time. Just go to the BHBI web page at www.BHBIRochester.org and click on the Amazon.com link. Each time you make a purchase after linking to Amazon.com from our web page, BHBI gets a percentage of the purchase price. The more you buy in this way, the more BHBI makes!

SMALL CONSERVATIVE SHUL COLLABORATIVE TORAH STUDY

The January Small Conservative Shul Collaborative Torah Study session will be held Wednesday, January 11th at 7:30 p.m. Come join the lively discussion.

BHBI WEB SITE

Have you checked out the BHBI web site lately? If you haven't there is a lot that you're missing. The web site at www.BHBIRochester.org provides information about many aspects of our congregation, lists the BHBI calendar, has electronic versions of this and previous bulletins going back several years, has an extensive history of our congregation along with historic photos, includes photos from several BHBI dinners, picnics and other special events, and has the unique Adon Olam Songbook with information on over 100 melodies for Adon Olam.

MEMORIAL PLAQUES

You can memorialize a friend or loved one by purchasing a BHBI memorial plaque. Our memorial plaques are very reasonably priced. For more information, contact Stan Schaffer at 473-8072 or stanschaffer@frontiernet.net

EVENTS IN THE COMMUNITY

Israel 2012 – The Environment at Temple B'rith Kodesh - January 9th – Alon Tal, who founded Israel's Arava Institute for Environmental Studies, a graduate studies center in which Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian students join environmentalists from around the world in an advanced interdisciplinary research program, will be the featured speaker at the Jewish Federation's first Israel 2012 lecture on Monday, January 9th at 7:30 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

Will to Create – Will to Live: The Music of Terezin - January 17th – The JCC's Live from the 92nd Street Y series continues with a dynamic interdisciplinary series that reveals the significance of Terezín—a transition camp/ghetto in occupied Bohemia during World War II—in which, despite Nazi terror, great art, music and educational activity flourished. Featuring the Nash Ensemble & Wolfgang Holzmair, baritone. Purchase Tickets at the JCC Main Desk or visit jccrochester.org for more information about this program which will be held at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, January 17th.

Jammin' at the J – The JCC's Annual Gala - January 28th – The JCC's annual gala at 7:30 p.m. on January 28th will feature live performances by The Swooners, the Bob Sneider Trio and Todd East and a special performance by the University of Rochester YellowJackets. Awards will be presented and there will be prize opportunities including the chance to win a private performance by the YellowJackets as well as other prizes. The event will be catered by Main Event Catering. There will be complimentary valet parking. Cocktail attire recommended. For further information, contact the JCC at 461-2000 ext. 210 or e-mail tcohen@jccrochester.org. RSVPs will be accepted until January 18th.

ESTHER SOLOMON

Rebezen Esther Solomon passed away on November 29, 2011 at the age of 105. She is survived by her sons, Rabbi Josef G. Solomon and Dr. Jonathan G Solomon, her daughter, Mrs. Naomi Anne Cowen, as well as numerous grandchildren, great grandchildren and great great grandchildren. The widow of Rabbi Aaron Solomon, Esther Solomon was a life member of BHBI and contributed greatly to our congregation. Mrs. Solomon lived on her own well into her 90s. She was always witty and sharp and had great insight. For many years we at BHBI had the privilege of celebrating her birthdays with her either at our annual congregational picnic in August or, in the last few years, at the Jewish Home where she resided. She was a remarkable woman who will be greatly missed.

WILMA MILLER

Long-time BHBI member Wilma Miller passed away on November 25, 2011 at age 91. For the past year or so she had been living in New Jersey. She is survived by her brother and sister-in-law and several nieces and nephews.

Yahrzeits

At the following Shabbat Services, we will read the names of our late loved ones whose Yahrzeits will occur on that Shabbat or during the following week.

January 6-7	Tevet	January 13-14	Tevet	January 20-21	Tevet - Shevat	January 27-28	Shevat
Sadie Aberman*	12	Estelle Hirsch*	19	Samuel Meilstein*	26	Etta Levinson*	4
Sol Lazarus*	12	Shie Schnidman*	19	Ida Boyarsky*	27	Ida Silver*	4
Fannie Osband*	13	Anna Buff*	21	Philip Hershkowitz	27	Sidney Appelbaum*	6
Celia Suskind*	14	Benjamin Dvorkin*	21	Jack Glazer	28	Jacob Komenski*	6
Dora Rogovin*	15	Goldie Simon*	23	Joe Lazarus*	28	Morris Suskind*	7
Nathan Garver	16	Leah Keyfetz*	24	Jean Spencer	1	Max Springut	8
Fannie Sablowsky*	17	Joseph Morris*	24	Morris Weinstein*	2	Herman Strauss*	8
Philip Sanzel*	17	Esther Sanzel*	24			Dvora Brodie*	9
Joseph Schiff*	17					Samuel Goldman*	9
Hannah Senzel*	17			*Denotes name memorialized on BHBI Memorial Plaque		Daniel Hirsch*	10
Louis Bernstein*	18					Hyman Aaron Nusbaum*	10
Carl Kleinstein*	18						
Rose Needler*	18						

We pray that our mourners will be comforted among all the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem and that the memory of the deceased continues to be a blessing to all who knew them.

**TO OUR DONORS – THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!
GENERAL FUND**

Judith Merver

Moris and Terry Amon

In memory of Esther Solomon

Gloria and Stuart Kaplan

**THANK YOU TO OUR KIDDUSH SPONSORS
FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER**

- December 3 Steve and Ruth Teitel in memory of Steve's mother, Eleanor Teitel
- December 10 Katie Metlay in memory of her mother, Fannie Titof
- December 17 The Congregation
- December 24 Jill Clark-Foulkes in memory of Barbara Bertman; Ira Cohen in memory of Karen Cohen

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THE JEWISH CALENDAR DEMYSTIFIED

The Jewish calendar is based on three astronomical phenomena: the rotation of the Earth about its axis (a day); the revolution of the moon about the Earth (a month); and the revolution of the Earth about the sun (a year). These three phenomena are independent of each other, so there is no direct correlation between them. On average, the moon revolves around the Earth in about $29\frac{1}{2}$ days. The Earth revolves around the sun in about $365\frac{1}{4}$ days, that is, about 12.4 lunar months. The civil calendar used by most of the world has abandoned any correlation between the moon cycles and the month, arbitrarily setting the length of months to 28, 30 or 31 days. The Jewish calendar, however, coordinates all three of these astronomical phenomena. Months are either 29 or 30 days, corresponding to the $29\frac{1}{2}$ -day lunar cycle. Years are either 12 or 13 months, corresponding to the 12.4 month solar cycle.

The lunar month on the Jewish calendar begins when the first sliver of moon becomes visible after the dark of the moon. In ancient times, the new months used to be determined by observation. When people observed the new moon, they would notify the Sanhedrin. When the Sanhedrin heard testimony from two independent, reliable eyewitnesses that the new moon occurred on a certain date, they would declare the rosh chodesh (first of the month) and send out messengers to tell people when the month began. The problem with strictly lunar calendars is that there are approximately 12.4 lunar months in every solar year, so a 12-month lunar calendar is about 11 days shorter than a solar year and a 13-month lunar is about 19 longer than a solar year. The months drift around the seasons on such a calendar: on a 12-month lunar calendar, the month of Nissan, which is supposed to occur in the Spring, would occur 11 days earlier in the season each year, eventually occurring in the Winter, the Fall, the Summer, and then the Spring again. On a 13-month lunar calendar, the same thing would happen in the other direction, and faster. To compensate for this drift, the Jewish calendar uses a 12-month lunar calendar with an extra month occasionally added. The month of Nissan occurs 11 days earlier each year for two or three years, and then jumps forward 30 days, balancing out the drift. In ancient times, this month was added by observation: the Sanhedrin observed the conditions of the weather, the crops and the livestock, and if these were not sufficiently advanced to be considered "spring," then the Sanhedrin inserted an additional month into the calendar to make sure that Pesach (Passover) would occur in the spring (it is, after all, referred to in the Torah as Chag he-Aviv, the Festival of Spring!).

A year with 13 months is referred to in Hebrew as Shanah Me'uberet (pronounced shah-NAH meh-oo-BEH-reht), literally: a pregnant year. In English, we commonly call it a leap year. The additional month is known as Adar I, Adar Rishon (first Adar) or Adar Alef (the Hebrew letter Alef being the numeral "1" in Hebrew). The extra month is inserted before the regular month of Adar (known in such years as Adar II, Adar Sheini or Adar Beit). Note that Adar II is the "real" Adar, the one in which Purim is celebrated, the one in which yahrzeits for Adar are observed, the one in which a 13-year-old born in Adar becomes a Bar Mitzvah. Adar I is the "extra" Adar.

In the fourth century, Hillel II established a fixed calendar based on mathematical and astronomical calculations. This calendar, still in use, standardized the length of months and the addition of months over the course of a 19 year cycle, so that the lunar calendar realigns with the solar years. Adar I is added in the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th and 19th years of the cycle. The current cycle began in Jewish year 5758 (the year that began October 2, 1997).

In addition, Yom Kippur should not fall adjacent to Shabbat, because this would cause difficulties in coordinating the fast with Shabbat, and Hoshanah Rabbah should not fall on Saturday because it would interfere with the holiday's observances. A day is added to the month of Cheshvan or subtracted from the month of Kislev of the previous year to prevent these things from happening. This process is sometimes referred to as "fixing" Rosh Hashanah.

OFFICE: The synagogue office is checked regularly for mail and messages. The synagogue phone is 244-2060. For urgent issues, call Steve Teitel at 473-5741 or Stan Schaffer at 473-8072. You can also e-mail us at BHBI@frontiernet.net

WANT TO REMEMBER OR HONOR SOMEONE OR A SPECIAL OCCASION? *Consider sponsoring a kiddush or making a donation to any one of our funds* (General Operating, Kiddush, Library, Torah, Rabbi Aaron Solomon Scholarship, Our Youth, Special Events or the Sam Malina Memorial Fund). Please indicate which fund you would like your donation to go to and we will send out an acknowledgement card as you indicate and print an announcement in this bulletin. A standard sponsored kiddush at BHBI costs just \$40 while a larger enhanced kiddush is just \$50.

BULLETIN CONTENT What do you enjoy reading in the BHBI Bulletin? Is there something that you would like added (or taken out)? If so, please let Stan Schaffer know. We always appreciate feedback.

DID YOU MISPLACE YOUR BULLETIN? Don't worry. BHBI Bulletins going back several years can now be found on our web page: www.BHBIRochester.org

WANT TO GET YOUR BULLETIN HOT-OFF-THE-PRESS? Consider having us e-mail it to you! Contact Stan Schaffer at: stanschaffer@frontiernet.net

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