



Beth El • Community Insights

Rabbi's Message
Rabbi Jarah Greenfield
Page 1

President's Message
Lance Allen Wang
Page 3

Services & Programs
Ongoing at Beth El
Page 3

Cemetery Meditation
Garden Dedication
Lora Block
Page 5

The Love of Others
Al Bashevkin
Page 6

A Veterans Daughter
Remembers
Roslyn Kaye
Page 7

Upcoming Events
What's Happening
Page 9

Eco Femme
Ilana Cohen
Page 10

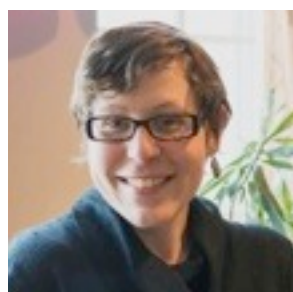
Contributions
Giving to Beth El
Page 11

Yahrzeits
Remembering loved ones
Page 12

Calendar of Events
July August 2014
Page 13

High Holidays
Services and Events
Page 14

107 Adams St., Bennington, VT 05201 • 802.442.9645 • www.cbevermont.org



The Roots of Reconstructionism

Rabbi Jarah Greenfield

Reconstructionist thought was developed by Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan during the 1920's, 30's and 40's.

Born in Lithuania, Kaplan was a product of the

traditional yeshiva world of his parents. In 1889 he immigrated with his family to America and, as a young man, embraced the writings of Emerson, Dewey, James and Felix Adler, the founder of Ethical Culture. Kaplan, who loved America and loved Judaism, was deeply concerned about Judaism being able to survive the sea voyage from Eastern Europe. In 1930, only 23% of Jews were members of congregations; most immigrants were eager to walk away from their shtetl past and its superstitious old world Judaism. The freedom of thought and practice that was available to Jews in the United States was a great watershed, but it came at the cost of Jewish community and continuity. Kaplan responded to the unraveling of Judaism not by promoting secularism, but rather by developing Judaism in a way that would enable Jews to emerge into an integrated sense of Jewish American identity by living in two

(continued on page 2)

Preparing Your Heart for the High Holidays

With the gift of summer yet to be savored, we glance quickly at the at the High Holiday season coming up in the fall.

This year, prepare your heart for the High Holidays on a

Contemplative Hike
Sat., Sept. 6th, 10:00 AM

and make note of our new

High Holiday
Service Schedule for 5775

See page 14 for details.

Board of Directors

Lance Allen Wang, President
Robyn Kozierok, Vice President
Jen Burt
Judith Frangos
Andrea Kolbe
Kayte Miller
Ellie Roden
Peter Rubin

Rabbi & Education Director:

Jarah Greenfield
rabbiJgreenfield@gmail.com

Rabbi Emeritus:

Howard Cohen

Administrator:

Rebekah Van Buren
office@cbevermont.org

Bookkeeper:

David Adams

Newsletter Editor:

Lance Allen Wang

Beth El Community Insights is a bimonthly newsletter and welcomes submissions from all.

Interested in displaying your ad in our bi-monthly newsletter, which reaches the greater Green Mountain and Berkshires area?

Please contact Rebekah Van Buren,
Administrator, for more information.
(802) 442-9645

civilizations—the American and the Jewish. Rather than forcing an impossible choice between being Jewish or being American he created a new paradigm for Judaism, one that was profoundly influenced by the field of sociology and the values of democracy and yet deeply steeped in Judaism's language, culture, ethics, history, symbols and rituals. A Judaism that could evolve would make for a meaningful Jewish life, Kaplan thought, and that transformation would save Judaism.

Beginning his career as an Orthodox rabbi, many of Kaplan's innovations were seen as radical and heretical. In 1945 when the first Reconstructionist prayer book was printed, the Orthodox community in New York burnt the book, a picture of which appeared on the front page of the New York Times. Kaplan was considered a serious threat, worthy of public denigration because of the changes he was making in Judaism. But he understood that at the core, Judaism has always been changing and evolving, and furthermore, needed to continue to evolve in order to meet the needs of the modern Jews and stay relevant in to them in the New World. Prior to Kaplan, a false notion of Judaism as a static tradition obscured the changes and adaptations in Judaism that have been made throughout history. By emphasizing the dynamic nature of Jewish civilization, Kaplan made the process of change transparent and placed ultimate authority in the hands of modern Jewish people to determine the direction of Jewish life. Valuing intellectual consistency and traditional continuity, Kaplan urged Jews to consider the spiritual inheritance of our ancestors and simultaneously acknowledge how modernity has affected and changed us.

The concept of Reconstructionism is, in essence, generative. It is based upon reinterpreting the past through the lens of the present and it places the Jewish people at the center of this ever-evolving process, providing us method for shaping our shared ethical and spiritual ideals and for replenishing vitality in our communities. In its beginnings, Reconstructionism was also trying to fix something broken in Judaism: the inability of an old system to speak to modern sensibilities, and the loss of Jewish community amidst an entirely new culture and society into which so many immigrants wished to assimilate. The wisdom of Reconstructionist Judaism is that we can and we must in our own time and place reckon with the obstacles and circumstances that confront us in order to replenish our own community and to rediscover within it the value of our people's Jewish heritage, culture, religion, and identity and their meaning to us as Americans living in and around Bennington in the year 2014. We must undergo our own creative adjustments and adaptations so as to transform the challenges we face into opportunities reconstruct meaningful Jewish life at Beth El. In Kaplan's words, "To reconstruct means to re-affirm, re-achieve, re-establish." I have deep faith that Congregation Beth El will do all these things with strength and pride in the months ahead.



Harry and the Haberdasher and the Hebrew Homeland

Lance Allen Wang

One could not conceive of the birth of the Jewish homeland without several names coming to mind. Theodore Herzl. Ben-Gurion. Weizmann. Begin. Golda. And Eddie Jacobson.

I know. I probably lost a few of you with the last one. But were it not for Eddie Jacobson, partner in a failed haberdashery in Missouri, it is likely that the State of Israel would not have been recognized in 1948. Eddie Jacobson, son of Lithuanian Jews, was born on New York's Lower East Side in 1891, and his family moved to Kansas City, Missouri, in 1905. While working there, he met another young man named Harry Truman, who he would encounter again in 1917 when they both reported for basic training as Army recruits for World War I. They would successfully manage a soldiers' canteen together, and then fight together in France and Germany in a small artillery unit commanded by Captain Harry Truman.



Eddie Jacobson and former President Harry S. Truman, 1954.

After the war, they went into business together, running a small haberdashery. The hat business failed in the post-World War I economy, although Harry and Eddie remained close friends for life. When Harry Truman became President, Eddie Jacobson had an open door to the oval office.

As information emerged about the fate of Europe's Jews, Eddie kept the President informed. President Truman later wrote, "Hitler had been murdering Jews right and left. I saw it, and I dream about it even to this day."

Zionist leaders knew of Jacobson's relationship with the President and sought access to him. President Truman, despite his disgust with the persecution of Jews, was growing weary of the international political dramas taking place in the immediate aftermath of World War II. The domestic economy was troubled, labor strife was rampant, and the Russians were clamping down on Eastern Europe and threatening elsewhere. Meanwhile, some of the great minds advising the President, including the redoubtable George Marshall, Secretary of State, were telling him to avoid getting involved in the Jewish homeland issue. With a possible showdown

(continued on page 4)

Services & Programs

Shabbat Morning Services

Saturdays, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Every week, the arrival of the Sabbath invites rest and rejuvenation for the soul. We gather in prayer, melody, learning and a light kiddush following services. Sponsoring kiddush is a precious way to share Shabbat joy with others; please contact the office if you wish to provide wine, challah and refreshments for kiddush.

Family Shabbat Connection

First Fridays Monthly, 5:30-7:00 PM

On the first Friday of each month, families with children ages 5 and under joyfully gather to welcome the Sabbath with music, art, stories and a vegetarian potluck dinner. It's a time to enjoy each other's company and to make a Shabbat community. For details or to R.S.V.P., contact Sherry Schwarz at sherryshwarz@gmail.com.

Biblical Hebrew Parsha Study

Mondays, 6:30-7:45 PM

Biblical Hebrew parsha study is an intermediate-level class for those with previous experience in the study of Hebrew in which we do close readings of the weekly Torah portion in Hebrew focusing on translation and grammatical nuance.

Absolute Beginners Yiddish

Wednesday 6:30-7:30 PM

Taught by Sandy Loiterstein, this summer Yiddish class is a great way to get acquainted with Yiddish conversation and culture. No previous learning is required and this class is free and open to the public.

Monday Community Dinners

Last Mondays Monthly, 5:00-6:00 PM

On the last Monday of each month from September through May, we host a community dinner for those in need of a good meal. Volunteers make these dinners possible through a variety of efforts, such as providing part of a meal, setting up, cleaning up, helping to serve meals, and connecting with dinner guests.

(continued from page 3)

with the Russians in the offing, Saudi oil would be critical – and recognition of Israel would jeopardize access. With the advice of men such as Marshall and Secretary of Defense James Forrestal, he tried to avoid meeting with Zionist leaders, though to his credit, he made clear that he would decide his policy about a Jewish homeland based upon “justice, not oil.” Jacobson, however, was undeterred. When Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann wanted to meet with Truman and was rebuffed, Eddie Jacobson met with the President. He said, “You have a hero, and his name is Andrew Jackson. I have a hero too, and he’s the greatest Jew alive. I’m talking about Chaim Weizmann. He’s an old man and very sick, and he’s travelled thousands of miles to see you. And now you’re putting him off. This isn’t like you, Harry.” The President met with him. Two months later, the United States was the first country to grant diplomatic recognition to the State of Israel, on May 14, 1948. Harry Truman was the last “common man” President. He was self-made. He was not college educated, was not one of the “striped pants boys,” his derisive nickname for the Ivy League alumni who populated the State Department. He learned leadership in the Army, politics in local government, and the hard rules of inter-war economics in a failed business. He respected loyalty and justice – two things the Jews needed desperately following World War II. For Eretz Yisrael, this unlikely champion was the right man in the right place at the right time – as was his good friend, Eddie Jacobson.



President Harry S. Truman (left), receives a Menorah from David Ben-Gurion, Israeli Prime Minister and Abba Eban, Israeli Ambassador to the United States, 1951.

Eddie Jacobson died in 1955. There was but one thing this unlikely hero would not live to accomplish – he wanted to escort his friend Harry to visit Israel after Truman left office in 1952. Sadly, this would not come to pass. However, the existence of the modern State of Israel can be seen in some ways as a monument to a plain-spoken self-made common man who simply felt “that the American government couldn’t stand idly by while the victims of Hitler’s madness are not allowed to build new lives.” For this, may the memories of both Eddie Jacobson and President Harry S. Truman always be for a blessing.

L’Shalom,

Lance Allen Wang, President

Moulton’s Spectacle Shoppe

HOURS

Monday thru Thursday - 9:00 - 5:00

Friday - 9:00 - 7:00

Saturday - 9:00 - 1:00

463 Main Street, Bennington, VT 05201 (802) 442-8002



The Bank of Bennington

Your Home
Town Bank!

Welcome

155 North Street
Bennington, VT 05201
802.442.1640

78 Center Hill
Manchester Ctr, VT 05255
802.362.4760

www.thebankofbennington.com



Comprehensive College Selection and
Financial Aid Advising
for Students and Families

Lora K. Block, M.A.

College Advisory Services

34 McIntosh Lane
Bennington, VT 05201

Phone: (802) 447-0776

Fax: (802) 447-7042

Email: lblock@sover.net



HOISINGTON REALTY, INC.

Suzy Yucht

Realtor



489 MAIN ST.
BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201
www.hoisingtonvt.com/

BUS. (802) 442-8337
FAX. (802) 442-1098
CELL (802) 688-9314
suzyyucht@hoisingtonvt.com
www.suzyyuchtrealtor.com



Lora Block greets arrivals at the Meditation Garden.

Cemetery Meditation Garden Dedication

Lora Block

All photos by Dr. Robert Block

Our Cemetery Meditation Garden was dedicated in a spiritual and emotionally powerful ceremony on Saturday, May 31 after years of planning and fundraising. Attending were approximately two dozen Congregation members and donors, who reacted enthusiastically to the enhancements of the natural beauty of the surroundings. Following the ceremony, everyone stayed to connect with the site and each other. It felt hard to leave.

Several attendees mentioned they had never been to our Congregation's Section (J-5) of Park Lawn Cemetery and said they were captivated by the stunning views overlooking the surrounding mountains and valley.

Rabbi Jarah perfectly set the tone for the ceremony by opening with a reading of Psalm 121: "I lift my eyes to the mountains/ from where does my help come? My help comes from Adonai / maker of the heavens and the earth." She added commentary about the Jewish meanings of mountains, air, earth. She established the spiritual context for this Meditation Garden by reminding us that establishing a Jewish cemetery, even more than a synagogue building, is by tradition and practice considered to be the necessary heart of a permanent Jewish community. She emphasized the significance of maintaining cemeteries in Jewish tradition. Our "Hebrew Cemetery" as it was originally called, was organized and laid out in 1953 by the early founders of our community. This Meditation Garden now adds a place for solace, memory, prayer for all visitors. Rabbi Jarah explained the meaning and importance of our tradition of placing a stone-- a very concrete, permanent object-- on a loved-one's headstone when we visit a grave. She passed a basket of riverstones and asked each of us to hold a stone for a moment of silence, prayer or centering, and then to place it in the garden's permanent stone vessel. Providing this vessel, made from a beautiful large boulder, was one of the main purposes for the entire project. Prior to this, visitors had to scrounge in the adjacent roadway to find an appropriate stone.



Rabbi Jarah Greenfield (left) leads congregants in prayer at the Meditation Garden dedication.

Cemetery Committee member Stella Ehrich spoke of the powerful artistic and emotional impact of the two steps "down to the earth" to enter the garden area.

I spoke about the almost-25-year gestation of this project, which I began to dream about soon after my parents, Elizabeth and Louis Kaywin, were buried here. I dreamed of a more welcoming entrance, of a place to sit, of a bit of shade and of a more convenient source of commemorative stones. I thanked our many generous donors and the Board for its support. My committee, Stella Ehrich, Peter Rubin, Phyllis Kaplan, Suzy Yucht, Julie Zelman all added essential expertise and support to make this dream a reality.



President Lance Allen Wang makes remarks at the dedication.

Board President Lance Wang encapsulated the meaning of this project very well in his remarks: "This beautiful work which we dedicate today is a testament to that ideal [of Mordecai Kaplan's about incorporating new meanings into Judaism over time]. This work represents a meld of each member of the committee's expression of Judaism, of all of the things which they've incorporated into their identity and interpretation of our faith. In this sense their work is very personal and very intimate.

"The other thing I'd like to point out is the enduring nature of the meditation garden. Here, in this cemetery, I see the stones representing the first families – the ones who created the Bennington Hebrew Congregation, which later became Congregation Beth El. I see the second families – I see Rolf Sternberg and Pat Barr's marker right over there – representative of the rebirth and revitalization of Congregation Beth El. But keep in mind our Shul is but wood and brick. Like all of us, it will return to the elements someday. But this beautiful stone creation will endure long afterwards. In some ways, we are repaying the gift to these first and second families; they have provided us the framework and seed of an enduring Jewish community. And in the form of this beautiful garden, are providing an enduring gift in return." We closed the Dedication with the Mourner's Kaddish and the Rabbi invited each of us to place a stone on a grave.

Cemetery Meditation Garden Ceremony

The following excerpts from the Cemetery Mediation Garden Ceremony were given by Rabbi Jarah Greenfield.

Opening Meditation

I lift my eyes to the mountains / from where does my help come?

My help comes from Adonai / maker of the heavens and the earth.

- Psalm 121

As we gather together on the sacred ground of the Beth El cemetery, our natural surroundings are a perfect reflection of the imagery of Psalm 121. Our eyes behold these mountains and this expansive sky, and we recognize in them a hint of that eternal resting place of the soul we call the heavens. And we stand upon this ground where our loved ones are buried and honor the earth as the reservoir into which the physical body dissipates.

Dedication

"We, the members of Congregation Beth El, hereby dedicate this meditation garden to the memory and legacy of all those buried here – family members, beloved friends, and those we did not know who came before us to establish this sacred ground as a permanent, final resting place for the Jewish people. May this garden - these stones and trees - invite us and those who will live after us, to dwell here in meditation and reflection, and to sense Your presence among the living and the dead, from now until eternity."

The Love of Others That We Need

By Al Bashevkin

Congregations are so much more than places to go to Temple each week...places that make the connection between our busy world and the spiritual world...places to see and be seen. Our congregation at Temple Beth El, is a community to me...a growing and building community...but always a community.

On January 30, 2014, my dad passed away at the age of 93. He lived a good life and was able to remarry after my mom died at the age of 79.. His life with Millie was a new life and one that brought a new family to me and my brother.

Losing a parent is a lonely experience. Being part of the Beth El community helped me be a bit less lonely and loved at a time that I needed it. My dad's funeral was an orthodox funeral and the presence of Rabbi Jarah at the funeral as well as the meal that followed brought Beth-El into my mourning period. Rabbi Jarah's commitment to do whatever I needed for Shiva is what I needed to hear. There was another Shiva going on in our Congregation at that time, likely making her offer one that was not easy to make happen. But she did, and it brought our Congregation into a new place in my life.

The Shiva was a healing experience for me. We said some prayers; I and other family members said Kaddish.. and we had as deep a discussion as needed to help me and my family come to grips to losing a father , a brother, or a Zaydie. The presence at the Shiva of so many who are part of our Congregational Community really did mean a lot to me. At times like this, it's the love of others that we need, and Congregation Beth El showed it well through cards and by attending Shiva.

I know that getting a minyan on Saturday at times can be a struggle, and I know that I am, at times, guilty of being one of the less reliable patrons of Saturday Services. Robyn Kozierak stepped up and worked to get a reliable minyan so that both myself and Roz were able to say Kaddish. That was a gift. Saying Kaddish continues the healing that began with Shiva and I am so appreciative to those who made the commitment to come and ensure that there will be a minyan each Saturday.

The Beth El community took care of this community member, and for that I am forever grateful. Life cycle events come at unexpected times. Our Beth-El community can and does make those events an individual as well as a community event and that really does make a difference in our lives. Thank you, Congregation Beth El.

A Veteran's Daughter Remembers

Roslyn Kaye

On November 11th, I thought about my father and the questions I never asked. It is too late to ask them now. Actually, I'm not even sure I would have gotten more than yes or no answers from my basically reticent dad. Still, I wonder what it must have been like for such a kind and gentle man to be thrust into a war.

My father, Private First Class Sol Gurin, was drafted in 1943 when I was about three months old. He went to the Half Moon Hotel on the Coney Island boardwalk for his physical. When my father returned to the tiny attic apartment in Sea Gate, he said to my mother, "Do you want a healthy husband?" "Of course," she replied. "Then, your husband is a soldier."

In the fall of 1943, Dad was sent to train in Spartanburg, South Carolina. With baby in tow, my mother became a camp follower. She brought home to him in the Deep South. A story was told of the Shabbes meal she prepared for him and twin Jewish boys. She asked their hosts, the Dormans (owners of the rooming house) if she could use their kitchen to prepare a Jewish meal for her husband and his buddies. "Jewish!" they declared, "We thought 'Sal' was Italian."

Graciously, they complied with her request and she bought the chicken for the soup and some fish she'd never heard of to make the gefilte fish. I can picture his pride and his sparkling smile when she served him and the army buddies that meal. I can see her lighting the candles. She waved her hands over the lights and intoned the ancient prayer. Then a moment or two of silence as she said a private prayer for the health of her family and the safety of her Sol and these young men. Then a turn of the head and a "Good Shabbes." My father took out his small worn prayer book to read the kiddushim in Hebrew. Then she served the delicious meal. What a wonderful treat for those boys. Dad was one of the oldest soldiers; he was thirty-six in 1943; the boys were eighteen. They must have been so comforted to have this taste of home and family so far from home.

How much news of the Holocaust was filtered to the public? Did my father think about the concentration camps and the

atrocities being committed against our people? Mom says they didn't know; the news must have been filtered through steel. According to her, even Kristallnacht was downplayed by the media. I asked my mother why he served without any apparent resentment. "Was it the 'Jewish Issue?'" "No," she replied, "He served because it was his duty as an American, not as a Jew. His country was at war."

My father was due to meet my mother at a wedding in New Jersey. "I'll try to be there." He never showed up, and the next day she learned that he had been shipped overseas. The ship carried him to Italy where his unit fought in the Battle of Anzio.

Today they call it "friendly fire," the shrapnel that hit him was from our own artillery, during an attempt to stop a German advance. Perhaps it was a lucky wound. He convalesced with an adoring Italian family in Florence. When he had improved enough to serve, but not to fight, he spent nine months on a ship as a painter and as a cook.

All his Government checks were sent to her, but it was difficult for her, emotionally and financially. You can see the strain and sadness on her face in the photos taken between 1943 and 1945. She took care of the children of some of the "Rosie the Riveters" so that she could remain at home with me and earn some money to help maintain her home.

Though he wasn't around physically, his presence was kept very much alive by my mom. She taught me to walk at eighteen months with a blow up ball my dad sent from Italy. My bubbe was very concerned that I was a cripple and said I needed to see a doctor. The ball came, and my mom blew it up and held it at an unreachable distance. "Give me my ball; my daddy sent it to me!" I cried. "This ball is not for babies; Daddy said it is for big girls who can walk to get it." Well, I ran to get that big beautiful ball that my daddy sent to me. The call to my bubbe was made. "Roslyn isn't a cripple. She can run!"

In 1945 he came home to the USA, but remained at Fort Bragg for two and a half months. After years of thinking that every soldier was my daddy, I finally met the one who really was mine. I'm sure I wasn't disappointed. He was such a handsome soldier; in the photos he looks like a movie star. His short stature certainly wouldn't have bothered a three-

(Continued on page 8)

Editor's note: This article was forwarded to me by congregant and friend Roslyn Kaye. She had originally written it and sent it to "The Jewish Veteran," the official publication of Jewish War Veterans of the United States, where it was published about 12 years ago. It is a wonderful story, and Roslyn's beloved father represents the archetype of the Jewish citizen-soldier who served during World War Two, came home, got a job and raised a family, all the while coping with the visible and invisible scars and traumas of their wartime experience. I've always disliked the all-encompassing term "The Greatest Generation" – rather, in my mind, these veterans are "The Greatest of a Generation." In 2011, the Veterans Administration estimated 670 World War II veterans die every day. May we cherish each day that we have with these men and women, and may the memories of those who have passed be for a blessing.

– Lance Allen Wang

(Continued from page 7)

year old, and those twinkling eyes and loving smile captivated all the women; why not this little one? They tell me I loved this stranger immediately; that's not at all hard to believe. My mom made him real for me every day that he was away. The reality was grander than her stories. No one had more love for children than my dad. He wasn't a storyteller or a player of games. His attraction was from generosity of the heart and soul.

At home Dad was fine initially, buoyed by the enthusiastic welcome of the entire nation to all returning veterans, and by the love of his friends and large loving family. The returning soldiers wasted no time; my cousins, Susan and Nancy, and my brother, Steve, were born in 1946.

The men were also welcomed back to the work force. The prosperity and good times of the fifties were on the way. Indications of total bliss pervaded the media and the country's collective psyche. They should have been so happy. Only the families knew of the nightmares – the times when my father and the other veterans woke up screaming from those horrible memories. I don't recall his being depressed, but I do remember that Dad and his brother Nauch and their friend "Yitz" went to Florida for a long vacation. Years later I discovered that my mother sent him to Florida because he was very "nervous." "Nervous" was used in those days to euphemistically describe a breakdown. I guess Florida did the trick that time.

Soon the memories of war were repressed. The men preferred to forget the battles. The only stories we heard were the funny ones, like the time Uncle Harold came to visit Dad in the hospital and told him he opened the package from home, "S-S-S-Sol, I ate your s-s-s-salami!" he stuttered.

In 1962 Robert and I got engaged and my family was aflutter with wedding plans. After looking at a few places and being turned off by having to match colors of tablecloths and menus, we announced that we preferred a small wedding. That night I heard my father pacing the floor. The next night when Robert came over, my father sat him in the kitchen and said, "I need to talk to you." He was very nervous and agitated. Then with more force than Robert had ever seen him exhibit, he took out a well-worn photo of his baby girl and said, "I carried this picture throughout the war. When I looked at it, I thought about surviving to make her a beautiful wedding." And we did, with tablecloths and menus matched lovingly by my mom.

During his "golden years," we were all reminded of the war when his shrapnel would set off metal detector alarms at the airports on trips to and from their apartment in Florida. On one occasion he opened up a bit and told us, "I'm luckier than most of the men. When the German artillery landed, many of the soldiers cried out, 'Let me lose an arm or leg, but let me survive this!'" Most of them, including the twins who shared that Shabbos dinner in Spartanburg, died that day. My dad was among the six who survived.

Peter, Paul, & Mary will perform a benefit concert June 29th (4:00pm)

Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul, & Mary will perform a benefit concert for the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies at the Israel Congregation. Manchester's connection to The Arava Institute goes back to its founding in 1996 when Rabbi Michael Cohen was a part of the founding faculty and staff of the Institute. The Arava Institute is the premier environmental teaching and research program in the Middle East, preparing future Arab and Jewish leaders to cooperatively solve the region's environmental challenges. Alumni from BBA as well as students from Bennington College, Williams College, Green Mountain College, and UVM have studied at the Institute.

Tickets are \$20 and will be limited, may be purchased at the Northshire Bookstore.

For further questions you may call Rabbi Michael at 362-7220.

Rabbi Michael M. Cohen
Director of Community Relations
Friends of the Arava Institute



Upcoming Events

Contemplative Prayer & Torah Study on Shabbat Sat., July 12 and Sat., Aug. 9, 10:00AM-12:00PM

The Contemplative Shabbat Service and Torah Study differs from the customary Shabbat service at Beth El by offering a more contemplative format for prayer and a more in-depth approach to Torah study. The contemplative Shabbat service incorporates melody, chanting, and silence to nurture on the day of rest a space for the heart to awaken. Time will then be given to reading and reflecting on the weekly Torah portion with selected texts and commentaries.

Tisha B'Av Service Mon., Aug. 4, 6:00-7:30PM

Tisha B'Av, the fast of the month of Av, is a day of remembering the destruction of the first and second Temples in Jerusalem and a reaffirmation of our people's survival through the ages. We gather in solemnity and candle light, giving ear to the poetry of the past while at the same time gaining new strength and courage for the present and future.

Shabbat Service Honoring Board Members & Volunteers Sat., Aug. 16, 10:00AM-12:00PM

The life-breath of Beth El is manifest in the leadership of our Board of Directors and the efforts of our volunteers, each of whom contribute of themselves in order to give meaning and vitality to our community. We gather for a Shabbat service and celebration of all those who have shared of their time, skill and talent by volunteering at Beth El. Kiddush will be sponsored by Rabbi Jarah Greenfield and Elizabeth Fredland.

Three is extremely significant in Judaism...

One element of this significance is that the human condition is divided three ways: our relationship to ourselves and the world of our mind, our relationship to others in the "real world," and our relationship with the Eternal. According to the Maharal of Prague, the three pillars of Avot 1:2 are Torah, Avodah (Service of God), and Acts of Kindness. CBE 3.0 is coming. Are you in?



Eco Femme: Women's Hygiene in Southern India

Ilana Cohen

My name is Ilana Cohen and I grew up here in Bennington and with the Congregation Beth El community; this past fall and winter I was living in Auroville (www.auroville.org), an eco-village in Tamil Nadu, India—a community in which I studied abroad a few years ago while in college. During my time there, I was part of a project called Eco Femme; Eco Femme makes washable cloth pads, an eco-friendly alternative to disposable menstrual products, and promotes menstrual hygiene practices that healthy, dignified, affordable, and eco-positive throughout India and around the world. Eco Femme washable cloth pads are made from layers of absorbent cotton, include a leak-proof layer and wings to hold the pad in place; they are designed to be beautiful, comfortable, and reliable. Each pad can be used for about 75 washes, or until you feel it needs to be replaced. Menstrual hygiene management has become recognized as relevant and important to the health and personal well being of women and girls around the world and also to the United Nation's Millennial Development Goals. India is the leading country working on improving access to menstrual hygiene products, increasing comprehensive educational programs, and tackling the environmental challenges of managing sanitary waste. It is increasingly clear that menstruation provides a unique space for us as individuals and communities around the world to rethink the ways we relate to our bodies, our selves, our planet, and each other.

In North America, most people have at least a basic understanding of the menstrual cycle; but we still pass on a lot of shame, secrecy, and denial about something that influences and matters to half the population. One of the questions Eco Femme's work inspires us to ask is how does a dominant cultural discourse around menstruation impact the individual's experience, the product she uses, and the way she relates to her own body? By exploring some of these subtle yet strong influences, we can reclaim the way we teach,

talk about, experience and 'manage' menstruation in positive, rather than shaming, ways.

South Indian culture tends to keep silent about the biology of menstruation; about 75% of the adolescent girls we held focus groups with had no knowledge of menstruation prior to menarche. They shared with us that when they got their first period they thought they had cancer, had suddenly become sick, or had done something wrong that their body was trying to purify. It is generally accepted as inappropriate to discuss menstruation with girls who have not gotten their periods yet, and many women don't know how to explain it beyond their own personal experience. Yet in Tamil Nadu, the state where Eco Femme is based, when a girl gets her first period a village or community wide celebration is held, called the First Period Function. This is a religious function intended to bless the girl and to announce her status as a mature woman; historically it is a remnant of the days in which a girl

was married upon menarche. The girl is adorned in gold and wears a sari for the first time; she receives gifts of beauty products, clothes, and jewels from her family and the village that are intended to prepare her for her eventual marriage and the family provides dinner for all the guests. Despite the positive, public celebration, most girls and women do not know about menstruation and their reproductive organs, and have no source of information beyond cultural folklore and practices. Access to reliable menstruation hygiene products is often very restricted; disposable products tend to be expensive and are only available in urban or semi-urban settings.



Ilana Cohen with a group of 10th standard students following a

Though accurate data on menstrual hygiene products across India is hard to acquire, it is estimated that about 12% of the country's women used disposable sanitary pads while the remaining 88% use recycled cloth (folded pieces of old saris, towels, cloth, or cloth bought intentionally for this purpose). Eco Femme does a lot of work to advocate safe washing and drying of these cloths and our own washable cloth pads; though the use of cloth as a menstrual hygiene product is often seen as 'old fashioned' and inherently 'unhygienic' the truth is that cloth is perfectly healthy to use, as long as it is cared for properly. We encourage women to dry their cloths or pads in direct sunlight, as this sterilizes them and dries them thoroughly before using them again. The reason cloth is often associated with infection is because some women face practical and cultural challenges around drying their cloths in

(continued on page 14)

Contributions

Congregation Beth El depends on both dues and donations to maintain its home and provide and expand its wide range of services. We provide Jewish education, cultural and educational programming, and outreach for members and the wider community of all incomes and age groups. It is traditional to provide donations not just during the High Holidays, but also to commemorate life-cycle events such as births and birthdays, Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, weddings and anniversaries, and Yahrzeits.

We are grateful to all those who have given donations recently. Thank you!

General Operating Fund

Mio Fredland
Deb Gluckman
Bernie & Gail Rudin in honor of Rabbi Jarah
Rudolf Vonkristen

Patricia A. Barr Endowment

Joan Lister & Steve Fogel in honor of Evan Kozierok's Bar Mitzvah

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Dale Fink & Betty Zimmerberg honor of Jacob Fink's Bar Mitzvah
Phil & Sandy Loiterstein
Gail and Bernie Rudin

Other Donations

Jonathan & Laurie Cohen: Community Dinner
Judith Frangos: Community Dinner
Karen Kwitter & Steven Souza: Community Dinner
Kayte Miller: Community Dinner

Dale Fink & Betty Zimmerberg: Prayer Books in honor of Jacob Fink's Bar Mitzvah

Joan Lister & Steve Fogel in honor of Evan Kozierok's Bar Mitzvah
Peter Rubin in honor of Jacob Fink's Bar Mitzvah

Karen and Michael Dreiblat in memory of Helene Mottes
Dr. Richard Mahler in honor of Ida May Mahler

Robyn & Charles Kozierok in honor of Evan Kozierok's Bar Mitzvah
Robyn & Charles Kozierok: Torah Repair Fund in honor of Ze'eva Berman
Robyn & Charles Kozierok: Torah Repair Fund in honor of Scott Burg
Robyn & Charles Kozierok: Torah Repair Fund in honor of Matthew Kozierok's High School Graduation

Jennifer & Scott Burt: Passover

Yahrzeit Announcements

Judaism guides us to observe the *yahrzeit* (anniversary of the death) of our loved ones each year. Marking a person's *yahrzeit* not only honors someone's memory but also helps us maintain a sense of connection with him/her in our ongoing path of mourning and remembering.

May their memories be for a blessing - *Zichronam livrachah* - זכרונם לברכה

<u>Name</u>	<u>Gregorian Date</u>	<u>Hebrew Date</u>	<u>Yahrzeit</u>
Arnold Paul Caplan	07/08/1997	3 Tammuz 5757	07/01/2014
William Turbin	07/12/2005	5 Tammuz 5765	07/03/2014
Esther Zucker		9 Tammuz	07/07/2014
Morris Yucht	06/22/1972	10 Tammuz 5732	07/08/2014
Dora Pundyk	07/03/2007	20 Elul 5767	07/15/2014
Ron Bertis Garner	07/02/1988	17 Tammuz 5748	07/15/2014
Golda Levine	07/21/1981	19 Tammuz 5741	07/21/2014
William Brown	07/16/1982	25 Tammuz 5746	07/23/2014
Jeannette Hayden Sternberg	07/16/2007	20 Tammuz 5766	07/28/2014
Alex Sidney Zelin	07/13/2010	2 Av 5770	07/29/2014
Viola Braverman	08/09/1986	4 Av, 5746	07/31/2014
Ellis Joffe	08/18/2000	17 Av 5760	08/03/2014
Rebecca Goodman	07/15/1975	7 Av, 5735	08/03/2014
Herb Roan	07/21/1994	13 Av 5754	08/09/2014
Ellis Joffe	08/18/2000	17 Av 5760	08/13/2014
Dena Ruth Yorke	08/21/1984	1 Elul 5744	08/19/2014
Carl Yucht	08/27/2000	27 Av 5760	08/22/2014
Edna Manis	08/04/1994	24 Elul 5757	08/23/2014
Barnett Bookspan	09/01/2008	Elul 5768	08/27/2014
Jason Bitensky	09/07/1978	5 Elul 5738	08/31/2014
Martin Klein	09/05/2000	5 Elul 5760	08/31/2014



Yahrzeit Plaques

Sanctuary Yahrzeit Plaques honor the memory of an ancestor or other family member. Each plaque is \$400. For more information or to request an order form please call the office at 802-442-9645.

Calendar of Events - July August 2014

July 2014

Tuesday, July 1

5:45 PM - 7:00 PM Biblical Hebrew Class

Wednesday, July 2

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Absolute Beginners Yiddish

Friday, July 4

**Office will be closed in observance of
Independence Day**

Saturday, July 5

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Shabbat Morning Service

Monday July 7

6:30 PM - 7:45 PM Jewish Life Cycle Class

Tuesday, July 8

5:45 PM - 7:00 PM Biblical Hebrew Class

Wednesday, July 9

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Absolute Beginners Yiddish

Friday, July 11

5:30 PM - 7:30 PM Family Shabbat Connection

Saturday, July 12

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Shabbat Morning:
Contemplative Prayer & Torah
Study

Monday July 14

6:30 PM - 7:45 PM Jewish Life Cycle Class

Tuesday, July 15

Fast of Tammuz

5:45 PM - 7:00 PM Biblical Hebrew Class

Wednesday, July 16

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Absolute Beginners Yiddish

Saturday, July 19

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Shabbat Morning Services

Wednesday, July 23

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Absolute Beginners Yiddish

Saturday, July 26

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Shabbat Morning Lay Led
Service

Tuesday, July 29

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Board Meeting

August 2014

Friday, Aug 1

5:30 PM - 7:30 PM Family Shabbat Connection

Saturday, August 2

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Shabbat Morning Lay Led
Service

Tuesday, August 5

5:45 PM - 7:00 PM Biblical Hebrew Class

Wednesday, August 6

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Absolute Beginners Yiddish

Saturday, August 9

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Shabbat Morning:
Contemplative Prayer & Torah
Study

Tuesday, August 12

5:45 PM - 7:00 PM Biblical Hebrew Class

Wednesday, August 13

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Absolute Beginners Yiddish

Saturday, August 16

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Shabbat Service Honoring
Board & Volunteers

Tuesday, August 19

5:45 PM - 7:00 PM Biblical Hebrew Class

Wednesday, August 20

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Absolute Beginners Yiddish

Saturday, August 23

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Shabbat Morning Service

Tuesday, August 26

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Board Meeting

Wednesday, August 27

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Absolute Beginners Yiddish

Saturday, August 30

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Shabbat Morning Lay Led
Service

Saturday, September 6

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM Pre-High Holiday
Contemplative Hike

Continue to page 14 for the High Holiday Schedule

Congregation Beth El

High Holiday Schedule 5775 • 2014

Services will take place in the Ada and Paul Paresky Sanctuary

Erev Rosh Hashanah – Wednesday, September 24

7:00 - 8:30 PM – Evening Service

Rosh Hashanah I – Thursday, September 25

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM – Main Service

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM – Family Service

Tashlich immediately following Kiddush

Rosh Hashanah II – Friday, September 26

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM – Main Service

Shabbat Shuvah – Saturday, September 27

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM – Morning Service

Kol Nidre – Friday, October 3

7:00 - 9:00 PM – Evening Service

Yom Kippur – Saturday, October 4

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM – Main Service

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM – Family Service

5:30 - 6:00 PM – Book of Jonah Study

6:00 - 6:30 PM – Yizkor

6:30 - 7:00 PM – Neilah

7:00 PM – Community Break-Fast

We encourage beginning this season of awe with acts of giving. Please help us collect the following supplies for distribution at the Kitchen Cupboard Food Pantry: diapers, dental products and small containers of laundry detergent and dish soap.

Pre-High Holiday Contemplative Hike

Saturday, Sept. 6, 10:00AM-2:00PM

Rain Date: Sun., Sept. 7, 10:00AM-2:00PM

Each Rosh Hashanah awakens us to begin our lives anew; each Yom Kippur beckons us to return to the roots of our being. But to truly open our hearts to the transformative process of the High Holiday season, we must find a way to directly experience the grandeur and fragility of our world and to sense ourselves as part of it. This year, prepare your heart for its High Holiday by joining us for an experiment in hiking, praying, talking and meditating while climbing Harmon Hill. The main group will be led by Scott Burg and a kids group will be led by Rabbi Greenfield. We will meet promptly at 10:00 AM at the bottom of Harmon Hill (in the parking area on Rt. 9). Participants need to bring layers, a hat, plenty of water, and snacks.

the open, and using a damp cloth can breed infections. Eco Femme works to help women become comfortable to properly dry these cloths so they can take good care of themselves. Because many women lack access to reliable products, their freedom of movement is often restricted during menstruation causing some to miss significant amounts of school, work, and family events/outings. It is clear that there is not one menstrual product that will suit all women, but Eco Femme advocates for preserving the practice of using cloth safely even though the trends of globalization are paving the way for a national switch to disposable products.

Eco Femme's educational initiative, Pad For Pad, seeks to bridge the silent space between celebration and secrecy by offering an hour-long session on the physiology of menstruation, information about different types of hygiene products and their pros and cons, tips for well-being during menstruation, and a chance to discuss the various cultural menstrual practices specific to Tamil Nadu. These sessions are offered at government schools by a team of trained Tamil facilitators. Girls really appreciate the chance to talk about their own experiences and to ask questions in a safe space with older women who can serve as positive role models. These sessions conclude with offering a kit of Eco Femme washable cloth pads to interested participants as an alternative to the low quality disposable pads distributed by a government scheme. For every Eco Femme washable cloth pad purchased outside of India, a built in donation of 80 INR (about \$1.35) automatically provides an adolescent girl with a washable cloth pad; four donations are grouped together to form one kit that consists of 4 pads, a travel pouch, a Tamil educational booklet and care instructions.

From an environmental perspective, Eco Femme also does a lot of work to spread the word that modern disposable pads are not as healthy for people and the planet as mainstream commercials would like us to think. Most disposable pads are made from LDPE plastic polymers, bleached wood pulp, sometimes cotton, and super-absorbent gel (polyacrylate). They often contain dioxins and furans, by products of the bleaching and cotton growing processes. Both furans and dioxins are highly carcinogenic and toxic air pollutants. Because pads are almost entirely plastic they take an estimated 500-800 years to biodegrade in landfills.



Photo is courtesy of <http://ecofemme.org/about/>

Though incineration is an attractive disposable method, especially in rural India, because it makes used pads 'disappear' (as there is no centralized waste removal system in villages) burning pads produces toxic ash and emissions from the burning plastic polymers. Though we in North America do not often face the physical challenge of disposing used menstrual products, the truth is that there is no 'away'; even if our public and private restrooms have special boxes, the trash ends of living well beyond us, though it is hidden in land fills. Through our focus groups we have heard numerous stories of the challenges rural and slum communities face because there is simply nowhere to dispose of used pads; animals carry them in and out of houses and often certain individuals are tasked with manually removing unwrapped used pads from public bathrooms. In short the 'convenience' of a disposable product ends up being incredibly inconvenient.

Eco Femme's work is at once very personal, involving communication in a safe space about menstrual cycle related questions and the myths that are so prevalent in Southern India, and also very public, involving conferences and roundtables where menstrual hygiene management and the associated cultural and environmental impacts are discussed on a national level. I really enjoyed my time being part of this project and feel honored to be able to share this information with the Congregation Beth El community. To read more about Eco Femme please visit www.ecofemme.org and / or our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ecofemmeindia>

To learn more about the context in which Eco Femme works, I've included the following links:

On the issue of waste management in India: <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/kicking-stink>

On the adverse environmental and health impact of disposable menstrual hygiene products: <http://www.wen.org.uk/resources/> (scroll down the 'Health' section to download 'Seeing Red: Sanitary Protection and the Environment')

<http://natracare.com/p113/en-GB/Your-Health/Chlorine-bleaching.aspx>

On menstruation and cultural practices in India: <http://menstrupedia.com/>



Congregation Beth El
107 Adams Street
Bennington, VT 05262

Congregation Beth El Donation Form

Please return to 107 Adams St. Bennington VT 05201

Date: _____ Amount: _____ In Honor / Memory of: _____

Your Name: _____ Please Also Send Announcement to: _____
Address: _____
City, State, ZIP _____

I would like my donation applied toward (please indicate one; default will be applied where needed):

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| • Where most needed (General Fund) | • Ida May Mahler Fund | • Rosebeth Miller Children's Music and Education Fund |
| • Building Fund | • Joe Madison Community Retreat | • Teen Ascent to Israel Fund |
| • Cemetery Fund | • Patricia A. Barr Endowment | |
| • Education Fund | • Rabbi's Discretionary Fund | |

Method of Payment: ☐ Check ☐ Credit Card ☐ Please add me to your weekly email list. Email _____

I authorize Congregation Beth El to charge my Visa or Mastercard for the above contribution in the amount of \$_____ Card Number: _____ Exp Date: ____/____

Name on Card: _____ Signature: _____