

THE SHOFAR'S VOICE

Sisterhood announces Torah Fund Luncheon



The date of the Torah Fund Luncheon for Sisterhood Members is set for Feb 26th. Please remember the Torah Fund pins are on sale as well. The pins are absolutely beautiful and the proceeds from this sale is an opportunity for us to help preserve, promote and aid perpetuating Conservative Judaism through active support of The Jewish Theological Seminary, Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, and the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies. The pomegranate imagery of this year's Torah Fund Pin has multilayered meaning. In addition to being beautiful, pomegranates (rimmonim) are one of the bountiful fruits of the Land of Israel. Rimmonim is also the term used for the silver adornments (finials) on the atzei chaim (Torah rollers) of the Sefer Torah (Torah scroll); just a little something extra that has adorned our Land, our Torah, our rituals, and mitzvot for centuries, and added meaning to our daily lives. May this year of Torah Fund activities and events be a blessing to one and all.

In this issue

Rabbi's Message	2
President's Message	3
Men's Club News	4
Sisterhood News	5
Yahrzeits	7
Birthdays & Anniversaries	7
Notes & Messages	8
Advertisers	10
Calendar	13

*This newsletter and a complete
archive of past issues are available
on our website at:
www.bnaiisraelpensacola.org*

From the Rabbi: Kaddish

Should one of us ever watch a movie or show featuring a Jewish character who finds him or herself in a synagogue or at a funeral, it is quite likely that the prayer featured will be the *Kaddish*. Perhaps one of the most widely familiar prayers of the Jewish service, the *Kaddish* exists in several different formats. The various incarnations of the *Kaddish* each serve a different purpose, come at different points in the service, or are recited during very specific occasions.



The *Hatzi* (half) *Kaddish* and the *Kaddish Shalem* are used to break up our services into different segments, pointing out where the morning service (*Shacharit*) ends and the Torah service begins, for example. *Kaddish D'Rabanan*, the Rabbis' *Kaddish*, is said after the study or completion of religious texts. The Mourner's *Kaddish* is recited at the end of every service and while there is a *Kaddish* specifically for burial, most Conservative congregations actually recite the Mourner's *Kaddish* graveside. As a result, the Mourner's *Kaddish* lingers in our minds as a hallmark of Jewish prayer and carries with it a solemnity and importance matched by few other elements of our traditional prayers.

The Mourner's *Kaddish* is required to be recited by one who loses one of seven immediate relatives: father, mother, sister, brother, wife, son or daughter. According to Jewish law, the mourner recites this prayer daily, with a minyan, for eleven months following the burial and on the yearly anniversary of the individual's death, known as the *yahrtzeit*.

The word *Kaddish* shares the same root (kuf, daled, shin) as *Kedushah* (part of the Amidah), and *Kiddush* (the prayer over the wine recited on Shabbat and Holidays). All three share a similar meaning: sanctification. Interestingly enough, The Mourner's *Kaddish* contains no reference to death, even though it is recited during periods of loss and remembrance. Just like all *Kaddishes*, the Mourner's *Kaddish* praises the Holy One, Blessed be He, and offers a sanctification of G-d's name. Perhaps then, the reason that this prayer is recited during such difficult times is because sometimes, especially when things are difficult, we need a reminder that not only is God near and present, but G-d is good and well and deserving of praise. Even when a loss is untimely and feels unjust, we as faithful Jews submit to G-d's will and try to recognize G-d as the Righteous Judge.

There are multiple motivations for the recitation of *Kaddish*. For some, it is the mystical belief that during the eleven months following a person's death, the soul of the deceased rises higher and closer to G-d with each recitation of the *Kaddish*. By reciting *Kaddish* we are helping our loved ones along the final leg of their spiritual journey. For others it is a connection to tradition that gives them comfort during a difficult time, a reminder of G-d in a time filled with sadness. But for most, in addition to whatever else compels them, the feeling of communal solidarity that one experiences, surrounded by family, friends and community members as they recite the *Kaddish*, serves as a very powerful motivator.

Should a minyan not be able to gathered, the mourner or individual observing a *yahrtzeit* would be unable to recite this prayer. It is therefore a tremendous *mitzvah* to help make a *yahrtzeit* or *shivah minyan*. It is not only a way to honor those who have left this world, but also a way to comfort and support those who remain.

Since my arrival, I happy to say that there have been less than a handful of instances where a *minyan* was not gathered so an individual could recite *Kaddish*. More often than not, we have the ten adults required. However, those instances where an individual is left without the ability to recite this sacred prayer are difficult to see. It is my hope that in the future; the fantastic response we see in general to calls for *yahrtzeits* and *shivah minyans* only improves so that all who desire to recite the *Kaddish* have the ability to do so.

From the President: Torah Reading

There has been some discussion regarding the current Triennial cycle of Torah reading at B'nai Israel since Rabbi Gerson assumed the role of spiritual leader. This change took place in the ritual committee meeting before Rabbi Gerson's first Shabbat service, and the vote was unanimous. I would like to give some history on this way of breaking up the cycle.



Let's start with the traditional reading of the Torah. The introduction of public Torah reading by Ezra the Scribe is described in *Nehemiah* Chapter 8. Prior to this, reading was based on the Biblical commandment of *Hakhel*, by which once every 7 years the people were to be gathered and hear the book of Deuteronomy read to them. The reading itself was performed by the King. Ezra is credited with initiating the modern custom of reading thrice weekly in the synagogue. This reading was incumbent on the *congregation*, not an *individual*.

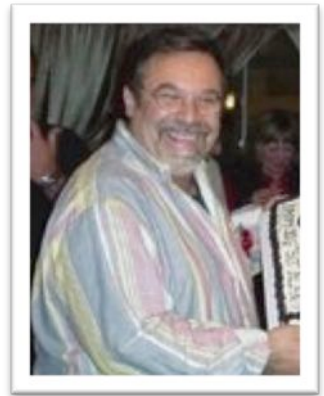
In a historical review, Lionel E. Moses cites Maimonides, who in *Mishneh Torah* observes "there are some who complete the Torah in three years". According to the Jewish Encyclopedia, the triennial cycle "was the practice in Palestine". As late as 1170 Benjamin of Tudela said Egyptian congregations took three years to read the Torah. In 1517, the first published Bible with rabbinic commentary is noted to have 154 *sedarim*. Rabbi Moses in "Is There an Authentic Triennial Cycle of Torah Readings," provided a clear direction by suggesting a return to the original Palestinian triennial concept. The Torah would be divided into 154 *sedarim* to be read over a three year period.

An alternative approach was recommended by Rabbi Elliot Dorff, suggesting the first third of the *sidrah* be read in one year, the second third the second year, and the third on the third year. His recommendation was approved by the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards. In the 19th and 20th Centuries, many synagogues in the Conservative movement have adopted this system in order to shorten the weekly services, allow additional time for sermons, and make Torah reading more approachable to the congregants.

As a congregation that has adopted this triennial system, we may be assured that we are following a tried and true system used by our ancestors over hundreds of years. It allows the entire Torah to be read in a three-year cycle in an orderly and coherent way. This system reflects a deep sense of reverence for the sanctity of the Torah text as well as a respect for the needs of our congregation.

Men's Club: Volunteering

This month's message is about Volunteering. What brought this to mine was my wife, Marci, who was having a hard time getting people to help with the Sisterhood Shabbat. Last month we had such a great turnout for the small Hanukkah party and we had lots of volunteers. I ask myself why it was so easy to get volunteers for a party like that yet at other events, you barely get anyone. I look at my wife who never turns anyone down, yet she is a mom who owns her own business and works 60 plus hours a week. She volunteers for B'nai Israel functions, Temple functions and the Federation. She is on more committees than you can believe. Sometimes if we can't get volunteers, we just make do with what we have. I know we all have commitments, work, children, etc., but there are those who volunteer at a drop of a hat.



Marci and I appreciate everyone who volunteers. If you take a minute and think about the dinners, the holidays, Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, and weddings that we all attend and realize how many hours it takes just to plan that event, you would be thoroughly amazed!

One of the best things about helping are the relationships you build and the feeling you get from it. Camaraderie is the best way I can describe it. It also is wonderful to have the children come and help, it makes them feel like they are a part of the community I hope I have not offended anyone. I feel strongly about this.

If we all participate, what a great combined effort it will represent for all of us! Again I know how busy everyone is and how hard it is to find time to volunteer. All I'm asking is just try!

The Worldwide Wrap: For several years the Conservative Movement has sponsored an event where synagogues from around the world all wrap tefillin on Super bowl Sunday. The idea is to provide a fun and easy way to learn about this special mitzvah. Whether you wrap six times a week, or have never wrapped, come and join us!

The event will start with a short lesson on the tradition and details of tefillin usage by Rabbi Gerson, followed by personalized instruction for those that need it. We will daven the Shacharit service and then break for bagels and coffee, provided by the Men's Club.

So please join us February 5, 2012 at B'nai Israel Synagogue in the main sanctuary at 9:30 AM. Any Jew above the age of 13 (both men and women) are invited to participate! If you have tefillin, bring them. If not, we have numerous sets you can use. Please RSVP to Alan Shemaria via email at: ashemaria1@gmail.com or by phone at (850)-341-2158.



Sisterhood: Lots of Activity

Sisterhood has been very busy over the past month. We had a wonderful sisterhood event at "Kil N Time" in the beginning of January. This program was well attended as our members, family, and friends decorated the Challah platters that were so marvelously displayed at our Sisterhood Shabbat on the weekend of Jan 21st. These platters were made as part of the theme of Sisterhood this year, *Hiddur Mitzvah*. Each member who participated in this program made and donated their platter to B'nai Israel Synagogue, not only to be used for sisterhood Shabbat, but for all Shabbats and other special events throughout the year. The twelve platters are absolutely beautiful! I look forward to more programs like this as the chavarah was so wonderful. A special thank you to Shannon Rubin for doing all the

logistics and planning for that event. The platters were decorated and donated by: Marci Shemaria, Rosemary Lieberman, Shannon Rubin, Becky Gerson, Jenny Kopulsky, Melanie Flietschner, Dani Berkowitz, Sally LaPierre, Penny Phillips, Lori Ripps, and Rachel Ripps.



The concept of *Hiddur Mitzvah*—embellishing a mitzvah through aesthetics—is attributed to a midrash (Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael) on a verse in the Song of the Sea: "This is my God and I will glorify Him" (Exodus 15:2). With enhancement and adornment, the mitzvot appeal to the senses and the heart, and sacred objects and activities become even more precious.

Hiddur Mitzvah, which is also this year's Torah Fund theme, resonates with many Jewish women, particularly those who have been involved in artistic activities. Whether they used their embroidery skills to decorate the woven curtains for the Ark or Torah mantles in 17th-century Italy and Prague, or are crafters in 21st-century women's groups, women continue to be committed to this most ancient of Jewish values.

As January comes to an end for those of you who attended Sisterhood Shabbat, we're sure you would agree the program was great. The women of B'nai Israel give so much of themselves; their love for our community and being Jewish is so apparent. With that said we want to take this time to thank the women who made Sisterhood Shabbat such a success:

Marilyn Efland	Stephanie Gaffney	Donna Cash
Shannon Rubin	Joanie Kay	Lori Ripps
Becky Gerson	Carolyn Pock	Francesca Levy
Rosemary Lieberman	Jennifer Davies	Marci Shemaria

We also want to thank all of the women who participated in the Friday and Saturday services and a special thank you to those participants from Temple Beth El's Sisterhood: Alice Klein, Rene Eillen, Linda Armacost, and Shirley Kraselsky. A big thank you also goes to Charles for his help in beautifying the Social Hall with his painting and for supporting Sisterhood with all his help and hard work with setting up, cleaning up, and overall help in the kitchen. As part of our service we remembered our sisters who passed this last year and are sadly no longer with us: Nettie Bush, Marilyn Levin, Sandy Marquis, Claire Ordon and Faye Roberts. We cherish their memories.

We would like to commend Deborah Simms for all her hard work taking on the role of running Sisterhood's Gift Shop. Please make sure you stop by, see the refurbished gift shop area, do some shopping and support your Sisterhood and Synagogue. Deborah has put a lot items on sale! The Gift shop will be open Wednesdays from 3:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. and on Sundays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Again, thank you Deborah for taking on this very important job. I also want to thank Carol Cohen for all the years she gave of herself in running the gift shop over the past several years.

On the weekend of February 3rd we will have a special Shabbat program as we welcome Anne Greenbaum, President of Women's League Southern Region. Ms. Greenbaum is not only our Region President, but also is the Mother-In-Law of our own Scott Rosenbaum (Gene's son). Scott and his wife will also be here, so make sure you come to services to say hello and celebrate this special Shabbat with Sisterhood and old family and friends. As the first Friday of each month is Family Shabbat, Sisterhood will be sponsoring the Family Shabbat dinner Friday evening on February 3rd at 6:00 p.m. and will also sponsor the luncheon on Saturday, February 4th. Ms. Greenbaum would like to meet with Sisterhood members for a short meeting after our luncheon.

And, last but not least, we would like to get everyone in a "Hamentashen Frame of Mind"! Sisterhood will again be baking Hamentashen for sale for the community. We are going to need help in the baking, and this is a perfect project to bring in your kids to help, and, of course, we are going to need customers! Please see the Hamentashen Flyer in this Shofar's voice and get your orders in early!

February Yahrzeits

1	Annie Stein Fish	25	Bella Perlman
	Rebecca Snyder		Charlotte Katz
3	Abraham Malino		Marilyn Kapner Levin
4	Louis Pressman	26	Barney Loeb Fish
5	Anna Fruchtman	27	Joseph Rosenbaum
	Henry Gordon	28	Askol J. Steigman
	Celia Rosenbaum	29	Eli Henry Ellis
6	Rabbi Moses Maybloom		Charles Erar
8	Robert Cohen		Adeline Fish
9	Anna Ciota		
	Joseph Grunin		
10	Marian Welch		
	Ida Schneidman		
11	Leah Rosenbaum		
	Rae Fischler		
12	Dvora Kaplowitz		
13	Aaron Herschkovitz		
15	Maurice Finman		
	Dr. Leonard Pock		
17	Hannah Shever		
19	Annie Lubel		
	Rebecca Weiner		
	Lillie Pressman		
	Wilfred Tucker		
21	Jack Rosenbaum		
	Abraham Greenfield		
24	Mary Herzog		
	George Stern		

Birthdays

- 3 Scott Rosenbaum
Leonard Swartz
- 4 Sue Ordon
- 8 Stan Rabin
Gabriel Friedman
- 13 Alan Friedman
- 14 Deborah Callier
Valerie Wenc
- 18 Michelle Kilcawley
- 19 Daniel Kaiman
- 23 Elliot Friedman
- 27 Myra Kahn

Anniversaries

- 27 Alan & Marci
Shemaria

Notes & Messages

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

The congregation is excited to welcome our newest members, Robert and Donna Cash.

A warm welcome back to Dr. Barry and Lori Ripps who have re-joined B'nai Israel Synagogue! An additional welcome back is also extended to Penny & Dan Phillips.

Also, welcome to our new Associate Member, Nathan N. Salant who resides in Hoover, Alabama.

We are thrilled to see our congregation grow with such exciting and enthusiastic new faces!

CONDOLENCES

Melissa Sontag's Sister, Joan Cruckshank passed away recently. The congregation extends their condolences to all the family. Long life and strength to all the family during this difficult time.

TORAH READERS WANTED

Torah reading classes will begin shortly after the New Year and will be held on Thursday evenings with Rabbi Gerson. Please check the website and calendar for more information.

DONATIONS

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Delores Livingston

Bruce & Bonnie Berezovsky

L'Dor V'Dor Fund

In loving Memory of Frieda Stone by Martha Miller

In loving Memory of Claire Ordon by Diane & Herman Lefkowitz

In loving Memory of Nettie Busch by Diane & Herman Lefkowitz

In loving Memory of Faye Roberts by Diane & Herman Lefkowitz

In loving Memory of Marilyn Levin by Diane & Herman Lefkowitz

In loving Memory of Jan Lefkowitz by Diane & Herman Lefkowitz

MISSING MICROPHONES

Our two microphones used in the social hall have somehow disappeared.

If someone is using them at home or elsewhere, please return them as soon as possible.



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February 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3 6pm Family Dinner 7pm Services	4 9:30am Services
5 9am Religious School 9:30am Worldwide Wrap	6	7 5:30pm Board Meeting	8 Tu B'Shevat 4pm Hebrew School	9	10 7pm Services	11 9:30am Services
12 9am Religious School	13	14	15 4pm Hebrew School	16	17 7pm Services	18 Birkat Hahodesh Shabbat Shekalim 9:30am Services
19 9am Religious School	20	21	22 4pm Hebrew School	23 Rosh Chodesh Adar	24 Rosh Chodesh Adar 7pm Services	25 9:30am Services
26 9am Religious School 12pm Sisterhood Lunch	27	28	29 4pm Hebrew School			

NOTES

Worldwide Wrap

Join us for the annual program where congregations around the world wrap tefillin on Superbowl Sunday. We will start with a short class on tefillin, including how to wrap it properly. Following the morning service, we will break for bagels and a nosh sponsored by the Men's Club. All Jews above the age of 13 are welcome to participate. Tefillin will be provided for those that don't have.

Sisterhood Luncheon

Please support the sisterhood on the 24th for their Torah Fund Luncheon. Torah Fund pins will also be for sale. Proceeds go towards The Jewish Theological Seminary, Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, and the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies.

Tu B'Shevat

Tu B'Shevat is the day that marks the beginning of a "New Year for Trees." We mark the day of Tu B'Shevat by eating fruit, particularly from the kinds that are singled out by the Torah in its praise of the bounty of the Holy Land: grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates.

Donation Form

Please select where you would like your donation to go by checking the appropriate box below.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Religious School Fund | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Scholarship Fund |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Rabbi's Discretionary Fund | <input type="checkbox"/> Kiddush Fund |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Book of Remembrance | <input type="checkbox"/> Flower Fund |
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(make check out to "Sisterhood") |
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- **Treasurer:** Jerry Gordon
- **Sisterhood:** Marci Shemaria & Rosemary Lieberman
- **Men's Club:** Alan Shemaria

Have a story for the newsletter? Email submissions to Dr. Arny Pock at newsletter@bnaiisraelpensacola.org by the 20th of the month.

B'nai Israel Synagogue

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