

Rabbi's Message

February 2012

There was no snow in December nor in most of January! That is unusual. Last January we had lots of snow. I am sure that you, like me, are happy that this year we do not have to shovel! But these global changes need to make us aware that we have to do more to save this planet. We have to be more active, conscious and spiritual.

Last month I took my kids to the Science Museum in Hartford and we attended a children's 4D show about taking care of the Earth. This show teaches children how to save energy, how to recycle different things, the value of not throwing trash on the earth, and the pros and cons of solar energy. The show may have been for kids, but those were great lessons for adults too. I personally learned how much energy we save if we turn off the computer each night.

This month we celebrate *Tu B'shevat*, the festival of the trees. Our tradition teaches us that this is the celebration of the renewal of trees and all of nature. All of us have busy lives, have needs and obligations that often pull us away from life's simple daily miracles. But I do believe if we do not remember who we are and what our place is, the human tendency to become masters and controllers of our universe can get the better of us.

That is why our Jewish tradition, in the month that we value nature, provides us with a multitude of practices to help us remember our place in the web of nature. Our sages understood the human condition and our tendency toward arrogance. They provided us with a wide range of practices to keep us on track, in harmony with God's creation. Reciting *brachot* (blessings) is one such practice. *Brachot* remind us that ultimately we humans are not the ones in charge. *Brachot* remind us to stop and pay attention to the world around us at times when we might otherwise take things for granted. In this way, *brachot* can train our eyes and our mind and enrich our lives.

Brachot are a Jewish way of telling us to slow down and pay attention because something special is happening that we do not want to miss. *Brachot* can help us to know our place in the universe and to know that God has given everything a purpose (whether or not we are aware of that purpose). Let us celebrate the renewal of the Earth by taking care of our planet and by saying blessings, thanking God that we are alive.

Next time that we see snow, let us say:

"Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha Olam She'Kocho Oog'voortoh Maleh Olam."

Praise to You, King of the Universe, whose strength and power fill the entire world!

B'bracha,
Rabbi Claudio J. Kogan, MD, MBE, MEd

Torah Tots

Torah Tots meets on **Sunday, February 5th**, 11:00 to noon. Come join us for an interactive parent-grandparent—child oriented session. This month the theme is Tu B'shevat. Open to congregants and interested community members of pre-school aged children. There will be a craft and snack. Meet the Rabbi, our school principal, Ms. Geringer, our librarian, Linda DeRusha, and our cantorial soloist and music teacher, Rick Calvert. RSVP to Sandy in the temple office.

SHABBAT SERVICES

February 3 (7:30 pm)

Erev Shabbat Service
Shabbat Shirah (Sabbath of Song)
Special Musical Service

February 10 (7:00 pm)

Family Shabbat Service

February 17 (7:30 pm)

Erev Shabbat Service

February 24 (7:30 pm)

Erev Shabbat Service
Guest Speaker: Rev. John Van Epps
Choir, North Guilford Congregational
Church

News from the Rabbi Search Committee

On January 13, 2012, The Board of Directors announced the appointment of Rabbi Stacy K. Offner as the fifth Rabbi to lead Temple Beth Tikvah. I hope that you all have received the announcement letter.

Rabbi Offner is "a rabbi whose greatest passion in life is people. I believe that God is profoundly present in our interactions with others. I love engaging people through Judaism so human beings can feel support, growth, purpose, belonging and connectedness. I love to build community through teaching, worship, music, informal events, counseling and social justice efforts." She brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to our community.

Rabbi Offner is a Magna Cum Laude graduate of Kenyon College with an M.A. in Hebrew Literature and a Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*, from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. She was ordained in 1984. From 1984 to 1988, she served as Assistant/Associate Rabbi at Mt. Zion Temple, St. Paul, MN.

In 1988, Rabbi Offner became the founding rabbi of Shir Tikvah Congregation in Minneapolis, MN. Rabbi Offner helped grow a small congregation of 40 families to a thriving 400 household synagogue. She worked with Shir Tikvah to establish excellence in education, secure the temple's financial strength and create a spiritual and vibrant congregation. In July 2008, "Rabbi Offner became the Shir Tikvah Founding Rabbi Emerita after 20 years of visionary and loving leadership."

From 2008 through 2010, Rabbi Offner served as Vice President of the Union for Reform Judaism where she shared her love of congregational life with the 900 URJ affiliated synagogues and led a restructuring to better focus on direct support of congregations.

Rabbi Offner currently serves as Interim Rabbi at Adath Emanu-El in Mount Laurel, New Jersey where she is described as, "an engaging, inspirational and warm individual who resonates Judaism through her speaking, her teaching, her worship, her actions and her support."

TBT Professional Staff
Rabbi Claudio J. Kogan
 Dr. Howard F. Sommer, Rabbi Emeritus
cantorial staff
Rick Calvert, Cantorial Soloist
educational staff
Marcia Geringer, Religious School Principal
Bernadette Stak, Nursery School Director
Linda DeRusha, Librarian
administrative staff
Jane Luyckx, Temple Administrator
Sandy Walsh, Temple Secretary
custodial staff
Don Bernat and Al Davenport

We are very excited to welcome Rabbi Offner and her partner Nancy Abramson to our synagogue family. We look forward to them joining us on July 15, 2012.

To view the entire announcement letter, please go to the TBT website at www.templebethtikvahct.org and follow the link to "Search Committee" under the sidebar heading "Get Involved." That link will bring you to our search committee page where you will find the letter.

Please read the Shofar and your emails from TBT for news about the transition as we get closer to July 2012.

The search process was one of great commitment by the members of the Rabbinical Search Committee. Each individual committee member gave very generously of his/her time, heart and mind in the service of us all for the greater good of both the community of TBT and the institution that is Temple Beth Tikvah. I would like to publicly acknowledge and thank the committee for their extraordinary work. I am deeply grateful to the members of the Rabbinical Search Committee: Allison Barasz, Sandy Brand, Ellen Buller, Rick Calvert, Barbara Chupp, Sue Groll, Nancy Kahrimanis, Alan Meyers, Heide Mueller-Hatton, Ben Muskin, Joel Silidker, Al Goldberg (*ex officio*, President of Congregation) and Wendy Bluemling (*ex officio*, Past President of Congregation), for their earnest and diligent efforts on behalf of our community.

If you have any questions, please contact a member of the search committee or email rabbisearch@templebethtikvahct.org.

- *respectfully submitted, Suzanne Frisch, Chair RSC*



The Temple Beth Tikvah Book Club will be reading the following books in the next few months:

February – The Frozen Rabbi by Steve Stern
 March – Sacred Trash by Hoffman and Cole
 April – This is Where I Leave You by Tropper

We usually meet the third Thursday of the month at the Guilford Diner at 7:00 p.m. If you wish to join us or would like more information, please contact Myra Josephson at 203-488-3350 or standj_992003@yahoo.com

NOT YOUR MOTHER'S MAXWELL HOUSE SEDER

This year, the Shoreline Women's Seder will again be held at Temple Beth Tikvah in Madison, March 18, 2012. But a lot has changed. This is not your mother's Maxwell House Seder! It's not even the same Women's Seder we've done in the past.

Our fresh approach to the ancient story will include many new elements:

- 🕯️ A new Haggadah
- 🕯️ A new leader - our Cantor in residence Nancy Ginsberg
- 🕯️ A new focus on incorporating our own poignant Passover stories into the Seder alongside the traditional stories and rituals (see registration form for details about how to share your story)
- 🕯️ A new round table seating arrangement to encourage our theme of "unify"
- 🕯️ A new way to honor our ancestors and special women in our lives (you will have the opportunity to display their name at the Seder)
- 🕯️ A new lower price (\$36 per person)
- 🕯️ A new time (3:00 pm registration, with the Seder starting promptly at 3:30, that also means ending earlier)

We hope the heart and soul and the warmth of our Seder will remain the same by:

- 🕯️ Creating a beautiful sacred space
- 🕯️ Highlighting women's roles in the Seder story
- 🕯️ Singing those great Debbie Friedman songs and dancing with our timbrels
- 🕯️ Oranges on the Seder plates!
- 🕯️ Sharing the festival of freedom with our mothers, daughters, friends, and Shoreline neighbors

Any woman is welcome to attend regardless of temple affiliation or membership. We particularly extend a warm welcome to the women of Congregation Beth Shalom Rodfe Zedek who graciously hosted us last year, and we hope to inspire those who have never attended a woman's seder in the past. Join our pre-Passover gathering. Celebrate freedom. Share your story. Here are two of our stories to get things started:

"Bring something that represents 'freedom' to you." I told the friends and family that would be attending my Seder. As we moved around the table, first we heard words of a 1950's folk

song long forgotten. Next, Ruth held up a flier from Stop 'n Shop and said that here in America, we have the freedom to choose from a vast array of options for everything we purchase. I showed my grandfather's naturalization papers from 1911. But it was Emily who really showed us the meaning of 'freedom'. "I've brought my husband," she said. "As a black woman, it would have been unthinkable for me to marry a white man fifty years ago. Once we were slaves, but now, we are free." (by Cynthia Braver)

One of the best memories I have from my childhood Seders was my cousins asking the 4 Questions in various languages. Of course the questions were asked in Hebrew and English. Then my cousin Lillian would ask in Yiddish. Then cousin Wynne would ask in French and Spanish. Sometimes other family members added other languages. One year we had a cousin who had spent time in China and she recited them in Mandarin! That same cousin was also on Jeopardy once, but that's another story! Another year we hosted a Jewish family new to America from Russia and they asked the questions in Russian. Aside from the intrigue of foreign languages adding an international flair to our family Seders, I also felt connected with Jews in other countries. I wondered if they were reciting the 4 Questions in their languages and participating in the other Seder rituals just like we were. I felt connected to a larger community and simultaneously proud of my own family. This is just one of the reasons I love the holiday of Passover. (by Donna Fedus)

To register, please see the invitation inserted in your newsletter. Contact Cynthia Braver at cynthia@verballegacy.com or (203) 315-8380 if you have questions. **Registration deadline is March 5.**

The Shoreline Women's Seder is made possible, in part, with funding from the Women of Vision Society of the Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven.

Social Justice

Food Drive

Food supplies have been extremely low at the area food pantries this season. A major drive around the holidays restored inventories in Guilford, but other towns are still in need. Donations are down significantly and the shelves need replenishing in order to assist those in need. Please bring UNEXPIRED canned and packaged goods to the Temple and leave them in the baskets in the foyer. We will continue to drop off the food to Branford, Guilford, Madison and the Jewish Family Service Pantry in New Haven. IRIS also gets a portion of the donations, which are sorely needed.

There is a constant and growing need for food on the shoreline. Madison serves close to 100 families, Guilford and Branford

(see Social Justice, p.4)

(Social Justice, continued from p.3)

add families weekly. Please give what you can, whenever you can.

Donations

We recently made donations to the **Community Dining Room** in Branford and to **Habitat for Humanity – Madison Cares**. As in the past, we continue to support this wonderful organization at the Founding Sponsor level.

Plans for house #8 are in the works. The new house will be built on Winthrop Street in New Haven. Ground breaking is planned for March and we are tentatively scheduled for build dates on March 25, April 22, and June 10. Please consider getting a group of friends together and signing up! If you have never participated in a build, you will be amazed at how much fun, and what a gratifying experience it is. Please contact Linda Brody Srebnik for more information.

Also, as we have mentioned before, after many years of dedicated service, Roger Winer has stepped down from his position as a member of the Madison Cares Board of Directors. We are looking for a TBT member to fill this important role. To learn more or volunteer, please contact Roger (rswiner@usinter.net), Bette or Laury for more information.

Social Justice Shabbat

The Social Justice Shabbat is scheduled for Friday, March 16th. Planning is underway and we welcome your participation. If you would like to participate with either an English or Hebrew part, please let us know and we would be happy to include you in the service.

Committee Meetings and Membership

We welcome all TBT members to join our committee. We meet the second Tuesday of every month. The next meeting will be February 14th at 7:15 pm. Please consider joining us. We are always looking for new ideas and suggestions as to how to be of help to our communities.

And finally, if your children are looking for assistance in planning for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah projects, they are welcome to brainstorm with us. There are many ways for them to be of service in the community including food, clothing and book drives as well as service work for the elderly and infirm (raking leaves, etc.).

Laury Walker (riga620@aol.com) and Bette Zollshan (rbz1@aol.com)



Stop & Shop and Big Y cards available in the Temple office, Gift Shop or contact Barbara Agranov 203-430-7647; ddagranov@snet.net

Schedule of Services

Friday, February 3

7:30 p.m. Shabbat Shirah Musical Service
Torah portion: Beshallah (Exodus 13:17 – 17:16)

Saturday, February 4

9:00 a.m. Torah Study
10:00 a.m. Shabbat Morning Minyan



Friday, February 10

7:00 p.m. Family Shabbat Service
Torah portion: Yitro (Exodus 18:1-20:23)

Saturday, February 11

9:00 a.m. Torah Study
10:00 a.m. Shabbat Morning Minyan

Friday, February 17

7:30 p.m. Erev Shabbat Service
Torah portion: Mishpatim (Exodus 21:1-24:18)

Saturday, February 18

9:00 a.m. Torah Study
10:00 a.m. Bat Mitzvah of Elana Morris, daughter of Adele Merenstein and Evan Morris

Friday, February 24

7:30 p.m. Erev Shabbat Service
(pulpit and choir exchange with North Guilford Congregational Church)
Torah portion: Terumah (Exodus 25:1-27:19)

Saturday, February 25

9:00 a.m. Torah Study
10:00 am. Shabbat Morning Minyan

Nursery School

Our Parent-Child program meets twice weekly to educate and inform parents about community resources, area businesses and other family related events. We are wondering if there is anyone in the synagogue community who would like to be a guest speaker for this program. If you think you have a subject of interest to young families and would like to share your knowledge, please contact Bernadette in the nursery school office (203-245-8039).

Rosh Chodesh

This month we are not meeting for Rosh Chodesh, but for Tu B'Shevat instead. This year Tu B'Shevat falls on Wednesday, February 8th. We are meeting at TBT at 7:00 p.m. (PLEASE NOTE THE TIME)

In Jewish tradition, there are four New Year's Days:

- o The first of Nisan is the New Year for kings when they must take stock of their rule
- o The first of Elul is the New Year for the tithe of cattle, ancient Israel's tax day
- o The first of Tishri is Rosh Hashanah, the birthday of the world, when we take stock of our lives and relationships
- o The fifteenth day of Shevat is the birthday of trees and when we evaluate our relationship with the earth.

The Tu B'Shevat seder was created in the sixteenth century by the Jewish mystics of Safed in Northern Israel. There are several different types of foods/fruits which we eat on Tu B'Shevat as part of the seder. This year, we are asking that everyone contribute a food. As the list of potential foods is long and varied, please email me (clairemorduch@gmail.com) your intention to join us and I will email a few options for food or juices you might choose to bring. Dinner beforehand will probably not be necessary. The March meeting will be the Women's Seder.

Adult Education



TBT continues to offer Adult Hebrew on Sunday mornings from 9:30 to 10:15 a.m. on those mornings that the religious school is in session. If you are interested in joining this class, please contact the office.

There is one session left in the four-part series led by Rabbi Sommer on "Fashioning and Affirming Religious Identity for Ourselves and Our Children." In this concluding session, to be held on February 12th, Rabbis Kogan, Goldenberg and Sommer will explore with participants the vision for the journey ahead: how our synagogue communities can help our parents and our children affirm positive religious identities. The last session will run from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on Sunday, February 12th at the Guest House Retreat Center in Chester.

Kollel Jewish Bioethics

Led by Rabbi Claudio Kogan

Date: February 13, 2012 – 7:30-9:00 pm

Place: TBT Library

Topic: Euthanasia

This session addresses a difficult topic for families of someone who is terminally ill and on a respirator, feeding tube, or other life support. How much is enough? Should treatment be continued with little or no hope of recovery? What is quality

of life, and what does it mean to the ill person and family members? These questions continue to come up, and decisions have to be made. What guidance does Judaism give us, and how can Jewish texts and teachings help us make these and other end-of-life decisions? Rabbi Kogan will lead the discussion of issues that each of us has faced, is facing, or may face in the future, as medical technology offers many opportunities for life and death decisions when a loved one is critically ill.

Come and learn together. No prior attendance is necessary. A recommended reading is available from TBT.

Religious School

Last year, each Religious School class had a class dinner prior to a Friday night service. We are continuing these dinners this year because they are such a nice way for families to celebrate Shabbat together with the Rabbi and Principal Geringer and to get to know one another better. The upcoming dates for the class dinners are as follows: 5th and 4th Grades (Feb. 10, 2012); 3rd Grade (March 9, 2012); and 9th Grade (June 1, 2012). **Please note that the 4th grade dinner has been moved to Feb. 10th from April 27th.** All dinners start at 6:00 pm. Parents will be contacted by the class parent(s) with more details about the dinners.

This year, the 4th - 7th grades will each lead one of the Sunday morning Religious School Tefillah services. All parents are welcome to attend any Sunday morning Religious School Tefillah service and are particularly encouraged to attend the Tefillah service that their children are leading. The dates for the class-led services are as follows: 7th Grade (Jan. 22, 2012); 6th Grade (Feb. 12, 2012); 5th Grade (March 18, 2012); and 4th Grade (May 13, 2012). Tefillah service starts at 11:40 a.m.

From the Principal: Marcia Geringer

Please join me in welcoming Blake Zwerling to our religious school faculty. Blake, a senior at Yale who is majoring in Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology, joined our religious school faculty January 4th as the teacher of Grade 6.

Blake attended a Reform Jewish Day School for nine years in Portland, Oregon which is where her family resides. After she completed her education at the Day School, she continued in a secular high school where she graduated as valedictorian. She was recently in Israel for several months as part of a Jewish Advocacy program. While there, she also took an Ulpan class (intensive Hebrew). She is fluent in reading, writing and speaking Hebrew. Blake is also the Reconstructionist Minyan Leader at Yale.

The students are enjoying their studies with Ms. Zwerling. Stop by Room 3 to introduce yourself and to welcome her.

CONTRIBUTIONS

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

by Len Fried in memory of his father, Arnold Fried
 by Susan, Howard, Elyssa and Jenna Kilman in honor of Milton Shaffe, beloved father and grandfather
 by Brian Holzman
 by Emily and Paul Phillips in memory of Daniel T. Phillips
 by Sally Cohen in memory of her beloved husband, Myron Cohen
 by Howard and Patricia Berke in memory of Howard's mother, Shirley Berkowitz

GENERAL FUND

by Judge Leonard I. Garth in memory of Rabbi Reuben Kaufman

BUILDING FUND

by Sally Spiegel in memory of Gordon and Nancy Peery

LAURENCE B. & ELAINE J. SOMMER MEMORIAL FUND FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

by Amy and John McCauley in memory of John McCauley, Jr.
 by Joan and Joel Marcus in loving memory of Anita Brill
 by Frohman Davis in memory of Edith Davis
 by the Kessler family in memory of Bob's father, Frederick Kessler
 by Sondra Bernblum in memory of Milton A. Bernblum
 by Emily and Paul Phillips in memory of Daniel T. Phillips
 by Bill, Kate, Susannah, William and Alexa Lee in memory of Marietta Lee
 by Ed, Laury, Jess, Dan, Kate and Levi Walker in memory of their beloved mentor, A.J. Alderman
 by Frohman Davis in memory of his beloved wife, Lorraine Davis
 by Jimmy Shure in honor of Dr. Aron Rose's selfless dedication to those less fortunate

ENDOWMENT FUND

by Sam and Rena Powell in memory of Jeremy Bixon, husband of Rebecca Bixon and father of David Bixon

by Sam and Rena Powell in memory of Milton Heller, husband of Regina Heller

by the Spigelman family in memory of Lawrence Richman
 by Judith and Charles Barr in loving memory of Judith's father, Sidney Keller, and Charles' mother, Sarah Barr
 by Judith and Charles Barr in memory of Charles' brother, Leonard Barr
 by the Czaczkes family in memory of Eva and Harry Czaczkes

THE RICHARD C. KAHRIMANIS MUSIC FUND

by Emily and Paul Phillips in memory of Daniel T. Phillips and in appreciation of Frank May, Walter Stutzman and all the members of the choir

THE PHYLLIS SILIDKER MUSIC ENRICHMENT FUND

by Tina Silidker in memory of her father, Joseph Wasserman

SISTERHOOD CANTORIAL FUND

by the Kohn family in memory of Adele Kohn Marcus

RABBI HOWARD F. SOMMER FUND FOR CONTINUING JEWISH EDUCATION

by Barbara Bernstein in memory of Martha Uhfelder Bernstein
 by Barbara Bernstein in memory of her wonderful husband, Ernest Bernstein

LIBRARY FUND

by Ina and Sid Berson in memory of Ben Beizer

THE ISRAEL & MARY TICOTSKY EDUCATION ENRICHMENT FUND

by Paul and Audrey Greenberg and family in memory of Bluma Boardman, mother of Burt Boardman

Congratulations

Paul and Sandra Beckman are pleased to announce the birth of their latest grandchildren, Maxwell Isaiah Singer and Luca Stone Singer. They are the twin boys of Jonathan and Randi (Beckman) Singer of Philadelphia, PA.



BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO:


Chad Bernal, Juliet Friedman, Tess Friedman, Robert Gillis, Elijah Houlton, Zachary Houlton, James Hyman, Julia Hyman, Marissa Irwin, William Irwin, Samuel Kaplan, Danica Lustberg, Max Mamis, Elana Morris, Clara Pinchbeck, Simon Pinchbeck, Addison Reed, Daniel Rimm, Aaron Rosenberg, Lindsay Rosenberg, Elana Rothberg, Melanie Siegel, Noah Spigelman, Olivia Zimmerman

In Memoriam

Bluma Boardman, mother of Burton Boardman
 Marjorie Freund, aunt of Helen Winokur
 Arline Glosband, grandmother of Jonah Barasz

Volunteer at
 The Connecticut Hospice, Inc.

If you or someone you know is looking for an opportunity to serve others in your community, we would like to hear from you. Our patients and families are in need of your care and support. As a CONNECTICUT HOSPICE VOLUNTEER, you can fill your hours (weekdays/evenings or weekends) by assisting in an administrative capacity or offering direct care as a friendly visitor, providing pastoral or bereavement care, helping in the arts or meeting transportation needs. For more information, please call Pat Corradino, Director of Volunteer Services at 203-315-7510. You can also email pnowak@hospice.com.



**TEMPLE BETH TIKVAH
SHOFAR**

P. O. Box 1269, Durham Road, Madison, CT 06443

<i>Rabbi</i>	Claudio J. Kogan
<i>President</i>	Al Goldberg
<i>Editor</i>	Julie Fraenkel
<i>Associate Editor</i>	Sandy Walsh

FEBRUARY 2012

Our Advertisers Pay the Bill – *Please Patronize Them If You Will*
To place your ad, please call the Temple office at 203-245-7028