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I Am Here For You

Rabbi Novak

We are heading into the celebratory season here at Israel Congregation with five *b'nai mitzvah* on the docket. Our first one, **Abby Hart**, begins on April 30th; I hope you will join us.

In the meantime, I am so appreciative of the luxury of taking the time to get well that has been given to me by the congregation. You should, I hope, know how much this means to me. The healing therapies that are being used right now are designed to eradicate the bad cells while keeping the good. In other words, it's not an easy journey, but it's not terrible, either. It's like being on the surface of the ocean: sometimes it's calm, and sometimes it's rocky. One hopes for calm.

It's important for you to know that I remain available to you during this period. There are specific areas for which I encourage you to seek me out:

1) **Pastoral Counseling:** Whether in-person in my study at ICM or at my home, or over the telephone, I do want to hear from you if you have something you would like to discuss. Let me remind you that whatever we discuss remains confidential between us. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to speak to many congregants in this manner, and I continue to welcome the opportunity to do so now and in the future. Please avail yourself of the opportunity.

2) **Questions about Jewish Practice:** I do invite you to continue to ask me your questions about our religious practices at Israel Congregation and in the Jewish world in general. I am always happy to elucidate and help create "aha" moments.

3) **B'nai Mitzvah:** I continue to work with our b'nai mitzvah students on develop-

ing their *diorei Torah*, their words of *Torah*. Yuval Sela works with them on their prayers and the services.

4) **Anything Rabbinic in Nature:** If you feel that I am the person to speak with, then I encourage you to do so.

Spring is arriving, the world is becoming greener, nature is more robust. Let us celebrate our blessings, today and always.

L'shalom,
Rabbi Novak

ICM Visits the National Yiddish Book Center

Monday, April 12 we will head out for a tour of the National Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts as the final installment of our ICM READS series. The response to our first two programs built around Aaron Lansky's book, *Outwitting History*, was more than enthusiastic and the opportunity to tour the National Yiddish Book Center and talk with Aaron Lansky is not to be missed. Estimated costs per person are \$5.00 for the Museum tour and \$10.00 for lunch.

There is still room for you to join us. If you'd like to be a part of this special outing, please contact Karen as soon as possible at 362-4578 or office@icmvt.org.

Let's deepen our *yiddishkeit* involvement by sharing this wonderful experience together.

****Note:** If you haven't read Aaron Lansky's book, *Outwitting History*, stop by ICM and pick up a copy from our library. It's a great read.

Israel Congregation has about 230 member families of diverse Jewish backgrounds, both full-time and part-time residents of southern Vermont. We provide weekly *Shabbat* and holiday services, a religious school, adult education, life cycle events, and cultural and social programming in a warm and welcoming environment.

An integral part of Jewish life in the Northshire for more than 70 years, Israel Congregation has been at its current location on Rte 7A, 1.2 miles north of Rte 11/30, since 1985. Our building is ADA accessible.

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Kabbalat Shabbat Service:

6:30 pm, Friday

(followed by Congregational Dinner)

Shabbat Service:

9:30 am, Saturday

Religious School:

3:50 pm to 6:00 pm, Wednesday

Office Hours:

9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday-Thursday

9:00 am to 1:00 pm Friday

Telephone: 802.362.4578

Email: office@icmvt.org

Website: www.israelcongregationvt.org

P.O. Box 1050 Manchester Ctr. VT 05255



It is with great joy that
We invite you to join us
As our daughter

Abby Jay

Is called to the Torah
To become a bat mitzvah
Saturday, May 1, 2010
At 9:30 in the morning

Betsy and Gregory Hart

Please join us
Friday, April 20, 2010
at 6:30 pm
for services and dinner
at
Israel Congregation of
Manchester

Betsy & Gregory Hart

Hope on the Slopes

When we learned about Hope on the Slopes, a fundraiser for the American Cancer Society, we thought that it would be a wonderful way to honor Rabbi David who, as everyone knows, is recovering from cancer. In this instance, the e-mails went out and the help poured in. Tikkun Olam supplied the money to buy the bags. The Religious School children, plus a number of our adult members, under the supervision of **Elinor Katz**, cut-up and designed luminaria bags in honor of the Rabbi. **Danielle Levine**, a former teacher at the Religious School, picked up the bags and, with candles in them, they lit the way on the ski slopes at Bolton Valley. The skiers in the Hope on the Slopes event were committed to ski for 11 hours to celebrate life and to overcome the specific physical challenge of skiing for that length of time. The ceremony was beautiful and touching. We'll make pictures available as soon as we have them.

Tag Sale Planning Underway

The date for this year's Annual Tag sale is Sunday, August 22, 2010 and it is time to mark your calendars. This event is a key fundraising activity for Israel Congregation and provides a service to the community at large. In order to be successful, the Tag Sale will require the support of a large number of volunteers. If you have previously participated in one or more of our Tag Sales or, perhaps, have never done this, we encourage your involvement this year. Volunteer forms and detailed information regarding donations and drop-off dates will be included in next month's edition of *the Shofar*. Everyone who donates one or more items will receive a letter from ICM stating that a tax deductible gift has been made to the temple. The donors will complete the information identifying the item and establishing a value.

President's Perspective

And you shall write (the words that I command you today) on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Deut. 6:9, 11:19

On a recent trip through Eastern Europe and while visiting the Jewish quarter in the city of Krakow, I was shown a doorway which had in its frame a vacant space, lighter in color than the surrounding stone. This space had formerly contained a symbol of Judaism, a *mezuzah*, which had been removed as part of the process of eliminating the Jewish population of Poland and all of the symbols associated with Judaism. This house, which was no longer occupied by Jews, and its discolored doorframe, stood as a silent memorial to what had once been a Jewish home in a thriving Jewish community. Having always lived in homes that had displayed a *mezuzah*, I decided to do a little research on the origin and significance of the *mezuzah* as well as any "rules" associated with it.

On traditional Jewish homes, you will usually find a small case made of metal or wood, which is commonly known as a *mezuzah* (Heb.:doorpost), because it is placed on the doorpost of the house. It is not, as some suppose, a good luck charm, nor does it have any connection to the lamb's blood placed on the doorposts in Egypt. Rather, it is a constant reminder of God's presence and of God's *mitzvot*. The *mitzvah* to place a *mezuzah* on the doorposts of our houses is derived from Deut. 6:4-9, a passage commonly known as the *Shema*. In that passage, we are commanded to keep God's words constantly in our minds and in our hearts. The words of the *Shema* are written on a tiny scroll of parchment along with the words of a companion passage Deut. 11:13-21. On the back of the scroll a name of God (*Shadai*) is written. The scroll is then rolled up and placed in the case so that either the first letter (*Shin*) is visible or, more commonly, the letter *Shin* is written on the outside of the case. The scroll must be handwritten in a special style of Hebrew writing which contains crowns on certain letters and which is normally utilized by *Torah* scribes. According to traditional authorities, mechanically printed scrolls (and certainly Xerox copies), do not fulfill the *mitzvah* of *mezuzah* nor does an empty case. It should be noted that the *mezuzah* is the properly prepared parchment scroll and not the decorated case in which it is placed.

The case and scroll are then affixed at an angle to the right side doorpost as you enter the building or room. A ceremony known as *Chanukat Ha-Bayit*, (dedication of the house) is then conducted and a blessing honoring the commandment to affix the *mezuzah* is then recited. The question is frequently asked as to why the *mezuzah* is affixed at an angle. The answer, in classic Talmudic fashion, is that the rabbis could not decide whether the case should be placed vertically or horizontally and, to solve their dilemma, they compromised and established the protocol for affixing the *mezuzah* on an angle.

It is the traditional custom that when passing through a doorway with a *mezuzah* on it, you touch the *mezuzah* and then kiss the fingers that touched it, thereby expressing love and respect for God and God's *mitzvot*. Traditionally the *mezuzah* would be mounted at a point one third down from the top of the door post, thereby accommodating both the tall and the short. However, awareness of the rights and needs of disabled people has now resulted in the placement of a *mezuzah* at a point on the doorpost which is easily accessible to someone confined to a wheelchair.

It is proper to remove a *mezuzah* when you move for if you leave it in place, the new occupant of the building may be unaware of its significance and may not treat it with appropriate care and respect.

So now that you know the "rules," check your doorposts. If you are in compliance, then you are blessed. If you are not in compliance, read this article again and do something about it.

Morty Bunis

Annual Meeting May 2

Mark your calendars now and plan on attending our Annual Meeting on Sunday, May 2 at 4:00 pm.

At the Annual Meeting we will be voting on a new president, new slate for the Board of Directors and our budget. You will hear reports from the rabbi and committee chairs. Please join us. Light refreshments will be served.

Mazel Tov

Liandra Aptekar on being named to the Dean's List at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Religious School

In addition to the ongoing study of Hebrew, it's been a lot about Passover this month in Religious School. **Jodi Stark** brought in a beautiful *Seder* plate brought here from Czechoslovakia to share with the children. She kept the students well engaged with information about the plate followed by a rousing game of matching the Hebrew words with the pictures of the ritual foods found on every *Seder* plate. Jodi mentioned the connection between Moses and Joseph which was a perfect segue to the next week when students were treated to a viewing of *Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat*, complete with popcorn. We finish our study of Passover with Susan Leader's final project of the year – *Seder* plates thrown on the wheel and completed with hand carved Hebrew letters and pictures as each student creates their own personalized plate. We'll also do some *haroseth*-making and take a look at a variety of Passover books and *Haggadot*. It's not easy keeping active outdoor-loving children inside on these spring afternoons . . . luckily their minds are just as active and they enjoy adding to their knowledge and enjoyment of Judaism every week!

Loree Zeif

Save the Date

Israel Congregation and the Manchester Music Festival will co-host our second annual afternoon musicale, *The Ties That Bind II: Find Your Inner Klezmer*, highlighting Jewish composers on May 23 from 3-5 pm. Mark your calendar!

April Calendar Of Events

April 2	6:30 pm	Friday Evening <i>Shabbat</i> Worship; Followed by our Community Pot Luck Dinner
April 3	9:30 am	<i>Shabbat</i> Worship, <i>Parashat Chol HaMo'ed Pesach</i>
April 5	9:00 am	Seventh Day Pesach Services, Yizkor approx. 11 am
April 6		Eighth Day <i>Pesach</i> ; No services
April 7	3:50 pm	Religious School
April 9	6:30 pm	Family Shabbat followed by our Community Pot Luck Dinner
April 10	9:30 am	<i>Shabbat</i> Worship, <i>Parashat Shemini</i>
April 11		<i>Yom HaShoah</i> : Holocaust Remembrance Day
April 12	TBA	ICM Reads: Trip to the National Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts; Office Closed
April 14		No Religious School
April 16		Friday Evening <i>Shabbat</i> Worship; Followed by our Community Pot Luck Dinner
April 17	9:30 am	<i>Shabbat</i> Worship, <i>Parashat Tazria/Metzora</i>
April 19		Israel Independence Day
April 21	3:50 pm	Religious School
April 23	6:30 pm	Friday Evening <i>Shabbat</i> Worship Followed by our Community Pot Luck Dinner
April 24	9:30 am	<i>Shabbat</i> Worship, <i>Parashat Acharei Mot/Kedoshim</i>
April 28	3:50 pm	Religious School
April 30	6:30 pm	Friday Evening <i>Shabbat</i> Worship; Followed by our Community Pot Luck Dinner Sponsored by Betsy & Gregory Hart in honor of Abby Hart's Bat Mitzvah
May 1	9:30 am	<i>Shabbat</i> Worship and the <i>Bat Mitzvah</i> of Abby Hart , <i>Parashat Emor</i>
May 7	6:30 pm	Family Shabbat Followed by our Community Pot Luck Dinner sponsored by Ina Rubin in honor of Al Rubin's Birthday

Food Cupboard April Wish List

It's Spring! Donations of basic cleaning products will help families get their spring cleaning done! Some needed items are: dish soap, paper towels, sponges, laundry detergent, bathroom cleansers.

Call for Volunteers in May: May is our month to staff the Food Cupboard. Volunteers are needed on Tuesday May 4, 11, 18, 25 from 9:15 am – 12 pm and from 1:45 pm – 4 pm. Please email Bryna Siegel Finer at bryna1212@gmail.com to offer your help.

Ma'aser Sheni



The Torah required three tithes of the Israelites. The first, Ma'aser Rishon was given to the Temple priests. The second, Ma'aser Sheni, supported the general community, benefiting both giver and receiver. The third, Ma'aser Shlishi, provided funds for the poor. Our congregants participate in the mitzvah of Ma'aser Sheni by contributing to funds that benefit the synagogue and its members.

GENERAL FUND

Ina & Al Rubin, Marlene & David Skulnik, Sandy & Marty Castelbaum, Karen Ganz & Robert Suttner, Selena & Sid Balick, Maddie & John Sobel, and Arlyn Bamberger in memory of Cathy Kimmel's mother, Catherine "Cissy" Thompson • **Loni Bader** in memory of Abraham Einhorn, Sylvia Einhorn and Steven Bader • **Maddie & John Sobel** in memory of Gertrude Sobel • **Theodore Friedman** in memory of Irving Friedman • **Phyllis & Robert Topchick** with wishes for Rabbi Novak's successful treatment **Laney & Larry Davis** in memory of Bertha Levine • **Sara Lee & Barry Larner** in honor of the birth of Mark & Fran Aronowitz' grandson, Graham • **Paula & Harvey Alpart** in memory of Anne Alpart **Eric Zinner** in memory of Joseph Zinner • **Barbara & Martin Donner** in memory of Tillie Donner **Bruce Baumgarten** • **Karen Ganz & Robert Suttner** in memory of Irene Glazer's mother, Sophie Deutsch **Maddie & John Sobel** in memory of Mark Sischy • **Jodi & Richard Stark** in memory of Lawrence Solomon and Frances Solomon

SHABBAT DINNER FUND

Kristi & Ron Marcus • **Cathy & Saul Kimmel** • **Linda Feldman** wishing Rabbi Novak a *refuach shelemah* **Helena & Neil Davidoff** • **Fran & Mark Aronowitz** • **Doris Bass** and **Karen & Michael Dreiblatt** in memory of Catherine "Cissy" Thompson • **Doris Bass** in honor of Harvey Flaxman's birthday and in memory of Sophie Deutsch • **Jodi & Richard Stark** wishing Rabbi Novak a complete and speedy recovery

TIKKUN OLAM

Marilyn & Edgar Rice in memory of Catherine Thompson & wishing Phyllis Gottdiener a speedy recovery

CHILDREN'S EDUCATION FUND

Ivy & Bill Schwartz • **Sara Dolsky** in memory of Mildred Dolsky • **Eileen & Neal Sherman** in memory of Herman Nathan Bluestone • **Roseann & Edwin Gordon** in memory of Florence Wein and Louis Abramson

LYON/ANDREEN SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Lynne Andreen & Dave Lyon on the loss of Michael Hass' mother and wishing a healthy recovery to Amy Lyon

Special Thanks

Robin & Bruce Guttman, Jodi & Richard Stark, Betsy & Jim Chase for their High Holiday donations **Ruthie & Norm Ellenbogen, Sasha Kent & Arnie Katz, Cheryl Ullman, Fran & Mark Aronowitz, and**

Irene & Ed Glazer for sponsoring our evening with Dr. Stephen Berk

Sara and Rachel Eisemann for leading services on Saturday, March 20

Micki Lisman, Fran Aronowitz, Lynne Abcug, Libby Harris and Rosalie Fox for organizing our annual Interfaith Seder

The Shalom Rav Singers (Maddie Sobel, Rosalie Fox, Carol & Barry Schoenwetter, Jackie Borella, Alison Hill and Ann Porter Brown) for leading the songs during our Interfaith Seder

BOOKNOTES

The library has a selection of wonderful new books. I hope you will all find some time to browse through them. Here is just a sampling, but there are many more, both new and old.

- ~ *2nd Avenue Deli Cookbook: Recipes and Memories from Abe Lebowohl's Legendary Kitchen*, by Sharon Lebowohl (Abe's granddaughter)
- ~ *Eye of My Heart: 27 writers reveal the hidden pleasures and perils of being a Grandmother*, by Barbara Graham. Insightful and honest essays from a variety of perspectives.
- ~ *The Yiddish Policeman's Union: A Novel*, by Michael Chabon. Imagine a home for displaced Jews in Sitka Alaska combined with mystery and humor.
- ~ *Daniel Deronda*, by George Eliot. A wonderful Victorian classic novel written in 1867 with lots of Jewish content.
- ~ *Jewish Visions for Aging*, by Rabbi Dayle Friedman. Practical suggestions and spiritual nurturing for elders and their leaders. Includes help for families dealing with Alzheimer's.
- ~ *Jewish Philosophy as a Guide to Life: Rosenzweig, Buber, Levinas, Buber, Wittgenstein*, by Hilary Putnam. Philosophy and Religion meet when Hilary Putnam engages these important Jewish thinkers.

Please stop by and see the other books we have. There should be something for all different tastes.

Gail Glanzberg



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