

AZOY

"Is that so?"

5777
FEBRUARY
2017



The Monthly Newsletter of Temple B'nai Israel
The Reform Jewish Congregation of Bay County
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∞ The President's Message ∞

I hope you enjoyed last month's Shabbat Tzedek in which we incorporated a civil rights service into our Shabbat service (inspired by MLK Day and written by RAC). Rabbi Wasserman did a masterful job inspiring us and instilling the spirit and message of the late Dr. King. Congregants were encouraged to bring guests from various other faith traditions to share the evening and many did. Thank you to Lisa Rahn for sharing this idea with the Rabbi and me so the whole congregation could benefit. We welcome these kinds of suggestions and initiatives.

This month TBI we will host a *Tu B'Shevat* Seder on February 10th along with our regular Shabbat service with Rabbi Alana leading us. We'll celebrate this agrarian festival with the standard seven species and a few special ones (like barley represented by a good craft beer for adults). The kids in Sunday Shul will also participate.

We will also start Adult Hebrew classes on February 19 at 10:00 am. Hebrew for adults is being added because folks asked for it. This is another example of TBI responding to your requests. We really want to satisfy your Jewish needs and desires when we can, so don't hesitate to speak up.

We're small but active and full of life. We need your talents, energy, ideas and participation. We need you to join us in keeping our shul alive and thriving.

L'shalom - Sarah

Save these dates:

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10:
TU B'SHEVAT SEDER & SHABBAT SERVICE**

Sunday, March 12: Purim Party

**Friday, March 17:
Corned Beef Sandwich Fundraiser**

Thursday, April 13: TBI Community Seder



The Rabbi's Message: Tu B'Shevat

This month, I would like to share an article with you that I wrote a number of years ago. I hope you take these words to heart.

One of the most spiritually moving experiences of my life was when I planted a tree in Israel. All my life until this point, I had been putting quarters into the Jewish National Fund's (JNF) blue and green tin tzedakah box so that someone in Israel could plant a tree for me. Now, standing there in the dirt, shovel in hand, I was doing it myself.

Planting a tree in Israel is such a spiritual moment. You are planting a tree in the Holy Land. You are literally putting down roots in a place where you have religious and historical roots. What separates this experience from any other in Israel is the planting of the tree itself.

Trees have a significant meaning in Judaism. For example, our holiest object, the Torah, is often referred to as a tree. At the conclusion of the Torah service, when we return the Torah to the Ark, we sing the words of the prayer *Eitz Chaim*, "It is a tree of life to those who hold it fast, and all who cling to it find happiness."

The Torah is the *Eitz Chaim*, the Tree of Life. Just as we have the Tree of Knowledge in the creation story, the Torah is "a tree of infinite knowledge, producing the fruits of new teachings and students over the generations" ("*Trees and their New Year in Rabbinic Judaism*" by Stephen Hazan Arnoff).

In the Talmud, we have the story of Honi the Circle Maker, who sees a man planting a carob tree. He asks the man how long it will take for the tree to grow and bear fruit. The man says it will take seventy years. He tells Honi that he knows he will not live to see it bear fruit. Instead, he is planting the tree for the next generation, as someone in the past planted trees for him and his generation.

A tree is not just a tree in Judaism. A tree is knowledge and sustenance. Planting a tree helps to ensure the survival of the earth. Planting a tree in Israel ensures the survival of the Jewish state.

On *Tu B'Shevat* we celebrate the birthday of the trees. Whether you are in Israel, at home, or anywhere else in the world, this *Tu B'Shevat*



(February 10-11, 2017) plant something. In doing so, you are not only helping to ensure the survival of the planet, you are also helping to ensure the survival of the Jewish people.

To learn more about planting a tree in Israel, contact the Jewish National Fund at 1-888-JNF-0099, or visit their web site at www.jnf.org. If you would like to learn more about the holiday of *Tu B'Shevat*, please join me Friday, February 10, 2017 at 6:00 pm for a *Tu B'Shevat* Seder, and at noon Saturday for our monthly lunch and learn. *Chag Sameach!*

L'shalom – Rabbi Alana Wasserman

Vacationing Religious School co-Director Georgie Hartzog promises a delightful Sunday Shul report next month!

Sisterhood Snippets by Lisa Rahn, President

The Sisterhood has had another busy month in the pursuit of *Gemilut Hasadim* (Acts of Kindness), *Tikkun Olam* (Healing the World through Social Action) and *Tzedakah* (Righteousness).

The Sisterhood members have applied to "Adopt a Senior" through the Family Service Agency. The elderly people in this program have monthly income less than \$1,000 and usually receive from \$16 - \$48 per month in SNAP (food stamp) assistance. We look forward to providing requested groceries in the middle of each month so our sponsored senior doesn't have to choose between food and medications or caring for their pet.

We enjoyed planning, bringing friends and providing the Oneg goodies for our wonderful and well-attended interfaith Shabbat Tzedek service on Friday, January 20. We look forward to including community members in other special events at the shul - - such as the corned beef sandwich fundraiser March 17!

We postponed our breakfast with our Muslim friends to allow those who were interested to join the local Sister Rally/March to the Women's March on Washington on Saturday, January 21.



Tu B'Shevat through the Years

Although my favorite holiday is by far Passover, I take pleasure in the other holidays in Judaism. One holiday that I associate with distinct memories is Tu B'Shevat. From sederim to planting to text studies, all of the following Tu B'Shevat experiences took place in different parts of the world and at different times in my life.

Highland Park, IL – 2006

In elementary school, I attended my first Tu B'Shevat seder. While this was not my first celebration of Tu B'Shevat – my mom has piles of art projects from Jewish Day School in Portland, OR – this is the first one I remember. We were in the social hall of my congregation and we all sat at different tables and sipped on concoctions of juice. I tried dried figs for the first time and loved them. We talked about how each of the



seven species corresponds to different attributes and I remember what figs stood for: *netzach*, endurance. As I ate the foods that are grown in Israel, I wondered when I would have the chance to visit this magical country for myself.

Medford, MA – 2014

In college, as a board member at Tufts Hillel, I planned an event for Tu Bish'vat where students could pot a plant in a mason jar and bring it back to their dorm rooms or houses to grow. We talked about how Tu B'Shevat is known as the birthday of the trees in Judaism and students loved having a concrete takeaway from the program.

Jerusalem, Israel – 2016

I studied abroad in Jerusalem in the spring of my junior year in college and was fortunate to be there for exciting holidays including Tu B'Shevat, Purim, Passover, and Yom Ha'atzmaut. Tu B'Shevat was during a school day, so on our lunch break, one of the student organizations hosted a Lunch n' Learn about the holiday. Eating the fresh fruit from Israel was memorable, as was our talk about environmental justice and the ethical issues around food.

This year I get to celebrate Tu B'Shevat by writing fun programs for my partner communities, and I'll be sure to enjoy a dried fig or two.

Take a break from the hectic work week and mark the Day of Rest with lighting of the candles.

Shabbat Candle Lighting Times for February 2017

02/03 | 5:04 pm 02/10 | 5:09 pm 02/17 | 5:15 pm 02/24 | 5:20 pm

Celebrate Trees and More on Tu B'Shevat

Tu B'Shevat is the Jewish Celebration of Trees and other agricultural mitzvot. The TBI Sisterhood will again host a Tu B'Shevat Seder at the temple on Friday, February 10th beginning at 6:00 pm.

This year the holiday falls on Shabbat and is also the weekend in which we welcome our Rabbi, Alana Wasserman. So we will intertwine the two celebrations just as a Passover Seder when it falls on Shabbat. We will skip our traditional potluck Shabbat dinner in favor of the Seder in which we share in the bounty of the harvest including the "Seven Species." We will conclude the service with an extra special Oneg.

Tu B'Shevat really is a delightful holiday and fun to observe with fellow believers. The holiday has undergone an evolution from its original purpose – recognizing agricultural

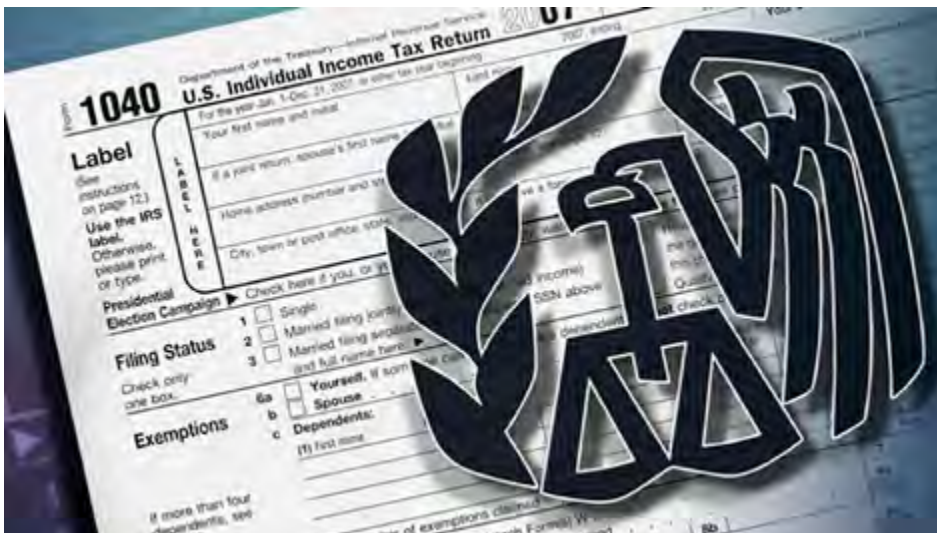
progress – to an opportunity to practice environmental stewardship today.

In the era of the Temple in Jerusalem, agriculture was of paramount importance. Farmers planted crops and orchards, fig trees and nuts. It was said that the first four years of growth were meant to be maturation years for the plants. But after the fourth year and on Tu B'Shevat, farmers could reap the benefits of their plantings. They were also asked to tithe one tenth of their produce as a tax for the government.

You may remember from your childhood being asked to fund the planting of trees in Israel. And, if you've ever been to Israel, you can see the multitude of trees that have helped to "green" the Holy Land. Today, some folks hold a seder similar to a

Passover Seder but with the Seven Species including grains, nuts and fruit as the centerpiece of the meal. We will honor Tu B'Shevat by feasting on the seven traditional foods of the holiday: wheat, barley, figs, grapes, pomegranates, olives and dates. The kids in Sunday Shul will also be planting parsley to grow and use in time for the Passover Seder in April.

Join us for the festivities on Friday, February 10th.



From the Treasurer

Any TBI member who wants an annual donation receipt for 2016 for tax purposes need but contact Treasurer Mike Starkman with your request:

treasurer.templebnaiisrael@knology.net

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FEBRUARY JOYS & REMEMBRANCES

Y A H R Z E I T S - THEIR MEMORIES ARE FOR US A BLESSING

02/01 **JACK WETCHLER** – BROTHER OF GAYLE PAYNTER
 02/04 **MOLLIE ROSEN** – MOTHER OF ALMA GLASS
 02/07 **DAVID STERNLICHT** – BROTHER OF DANIEL STERNLICHT
 02/11 **JOSEPH WHEELER** – FATHER OF MARE WHEELER
 02/12 **JEROME SHUMAN** – BROTHER OF MARILYN NATIONS
 02/12 **BARBARA WEINSTEIN** – SISTER OF MARILYN NATIONS
 02/15 **HOWARD LIST** – FATHER OF JUDITH SCOTT
 02/16 **YETTA NAGLER** – GRANDMOTHER OF ED NAGLER
 02/16 **LOUIS GINGOLD** – GRANDFATHER OF ALVIN GINGOLD
 02/20 **ROSE SHUMAN** – MOTHER OF MARILYN NATIONS
 30 SHEVAT **CECIL STARKMAN** – GRANDMOTHER OF MIKE STARKMAN



BIRTHDAYS

02/05 ROBERT GOETZ
 02/13 ANITA SILVER SKOULA
 02/15 GAYLE PAYNTER
 02/19 DANIELLE NAGLER
 02/23 BRANDI HAIMAN
 02/25 DARREN HAIMAN
 02/28 BOB PELL
 02/28 NATHANIEL SICKERMAN

ANNIVERSARIES

02/06 JUDITH SCOTT & SARAH FARKAS
 02/13 PAM SUTTON & MIKE STONE

*If your Joy or Remembrance is missing or incorrect
 please e-mail The AZOY Editors at theazoy@gmail.com
 and let Sarah & Stephen know about it ASAP!*

FEBRUARY 2017 CALENDAR

SUN	02/05	9:30 am	Religious School
WED	02/08	6:30 pm	Monthly Temple Board of Directors Meeting
FRI	02/10	6:00 pm	Special Tu B'Shevat Seder with 7 Species and 4 Seasons celebrated within our Shabbat Service with Rabbi Wasserman - followed by a special oneg (no dinner)
SAT	02/11	9:30 am	Interfaith Jewish-Muslim Women's Breakfast at The Egg & I on Thomas Dr, PCB
		12:00 pm	Lunch & Learn with Rabbi Wasserman - bring a bag lunch, we'll provide beverages
		5:00 pm	Havdalah at Oaks by the Bay Park, St Andrews - followed by dinner at Los Antojitos
SUN	02/12	9:30 am	Religious School – including planting parsley for Pesach
		11:30 am	Lite Brunch as we try to Stump the Rabbi
TUES	02/14		<i>"All You Need is Love" – John Lennon, The Beatles</i>
WED	02/15	6:30 pm	Sisterhood Meeting
SUN	02/19	9:30 am	No Religious School
		10:00 am	1st Adult Hebrew Class – nosh included
FRI	02/24	7:00 pm	Shabbat Service led by Mike & Mary Starkman
SUN	02/29	9:30 am	Religious School



Chanukah Party - December 31

A great big THANK YOU to everyone who contributed time, energy, food and Latke Expertise to make the 2016 TBI Chanukah Party a resounding and delicious success! Children and adults alike had a great time and ate very well! As proof, here's three more photos taken by our President, Sarah Farkas.

The event received quite a bit of news coverage from our local TV stations and newspaper. Two links are available below:

News Channel 7 WJHG

<http://www.wjhg.com/content/news/Jewish-community-celebrates-the-last-day-of-Hannukah--409014705.html>

Panama City News Herald

<http://www.newsherald.com/news/20170101/bay-county-celebrates-hanukkah>

News Channel 13 WMBB

The station aired a report but did not post it on-line



AROMATIC PLANTS OF ERETZ ISRAEL



Israel Post will issue three 4.10 new shekel (NIS) stamps February 7, featuring Aromatic Plants. The stamps picture myrrh, frankincense, and balsam, aromatic plants which were significant in the history of Eretz Israel. The new stamps were designed by Tuvia Kurtz & Osnat Eshel.

Who is she that comes up from the desert like columns of smoke, in clouds of myrrh and frankincense, of all the powders of the merchant?
Song of Songs 3:6

“Today, Aromatic Plants are mostly thought of as fragrant plants used for the production of volatile fragrant materials – “essential oils” – by the distillation process. However, in the distant past this process was unknown and perfumes were produced using methods of extraction or resin drainage from certain plants.

Thus, myrrh and frankincense, which grew mainly in the Red Sea area of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, became an important and precious source for perfumes.

Throughout history, these plants have been used for cosmetics, medicine and mainly for religious rituals in ancient Egyptian, Jewish, Christian and Far Eastern temples.

They are mentioned frequently in the Bible and are among the ingredients used in the incense offering made in the Temple.

The great demand for these plants led to the establishment of trade routes, where caravans of camels carried their wares from the key growing areas to Egypt, Eretz Israel and Europe. Over time, Eretz Israel became an important crossroads on the Incense Route, which was controlled by the Nabateans.

In addition, Eretz Israel was known for growing another well known aromatic plant – balsam, which grew mainly in the Dead Sea and Gilead area. Balsam was unique to Eretz Israel and was also used for cosmetics, medicine and incense, and was an important economic resource. Thus, the method for its production was kept confidential, as referenced in the mosaic floor in the ancient synagogue unearthed in Ein Gedi.

Frankincense

A genus (*Boswellia*) of the Burseraceae family that includes a number of tree and bush species from which the resin used for the incense called frankincense is derived. The resin is collected in containers after puncturing the bark of the young tree trunk.

Myrrh

A genus (*Commiphora*) that also belongs to the Burseraceae family which includes species of bushes from which the resin used for the incense called myrrh is derived by slicing the bark of young branches. The species most commonly used is *Commiphora mirrha*.

Balsam

The balsam plant is mentioned in ancient writings and is consistent with the biblical *Tzori* plant which served as the source for producing high quality perfume. After some deliberation regarding the identification of the plant, there is now widespread agreement among researchers identifying it as one of the myrrh species of the Burseraceae family, *Commiphora gileadensis*, which still grows in the southern Arabian Peninsula. This plant was introduced to Israel and acclimatized in recent years and is now cultivated in the Ein Gedi and northern Dead Sea area.”

text by Professor Nativ Dudai
Unit of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants
Agricultural Research Organization
Newe Ya'ar Research Center

www.israelpost.co.il/postboolaee.nsf/HanpakotViewEng?OpenView&L=EN