

AZOY

"Is that so?"

MAY 2015
Iyar/Sivan 5775



**UNION for
REFORM JUDAISM**
האיחוד ליהדות רפורמית

SERVING REFORM CONGREGATIONS IN NORTH AMERICA

*The Monthly Newsletter of Temple B'nai Israel
The Reform Jewish Congregation of Bay County
Mailing Address: PO Box 16556, Panama City, FL 32406
Located at: 1910 Frankford Avenue, Panama City, Florida
850-522-8685 / <http://bnaiisraelpc.org>*



*Avi and Laura Tuvyana
cordially invite you to join in the
Bar mitzvah ceremony and
celebration of their son:*

*Benjamin Yosef Tuvyana
at the Temple B'Nai Israel,
1910 Frankford Avenue, with
the direction of Rabbi Baroff at
10:00 am. An Oneg will follow.*

*RSVP: 850 303-3581 or email:
liquiddream1@gmail.com*

FINAL CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE TBI BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The 2015 Nominating Committee will conclude its search for qualified nominees for the next slate of officers and trustees on May 13.

Any member in good standing wishing to run for an available office should submit his or her name and the office for which you wish to run in writing to Temple

Secretary Sarah Farkas, at the mailing address at the top of this page. Your letter must be received no later than May 13, 2015.

Nominations will be closed following the May Board of Trustees meeting, to allow for notification to the congregation, prior to our Annual Congregational Meeting in June, when elections are held. No nominations may be made from the floor.

If you wish to discuss the possibility of your nomination, please contact Stephen Sickerman, Nominating Committee Chair, at 814-2610 or sickerman@comcast.net.

Message from Temple President Alvin Gingold

My Dear Friends -

Our Congregational and Community Seder was a big success. Rabbi Simons, in his first visit from ISJL, did an excellent job in leading the Seder. I hope and pray that we will be able to have the Rabbi visit again next year.

On a special note, I would like to say a “Big Thank You” to Lois Oswald. Lois has given many years of her time as the chairperson in planning the Seder. Lois announced, at the Semi Annual Meeting, this would be her last year as chairperson. This torch has been passed to the Sisterhood of our Synagogue. I am sure they will continue to carry the torch for years to come.

Shalom - Alvin



ISJL Rabbi Jeremy Simons takes a selfie with the 5 finders of the lost Afikomen 4/3/15 | photos by Stephen Sickerman



News from Religious School by Cynthia Gingold

The Children's Seder was filled with lots of chocolate and lots of smiles. From the tootsie rolls replacing the shankbones to the glasses of chocolate "wine," sour candies replacing the maror, and the chocolate pudding mini-marshmallows and chocolate chips

charoset, the kids loved the chocolate-covered delicious strawberries made by Mr. Alvin. The event was a huge success! Will we repeat the experience next year? Only if the kids have managed to come down from their sugar rushes!

What the Heck are Lag B'Omer and Shavuot? by Sarah Farkas

In ancient times the Israelites commonly made offerings to the Temple in Jerusalem. An *omer* is a Hebrew measurement equaling approximately 3.6 liters of grain. So that's the literal definition. In the Jewish tradition, the days between Passover and Shavuot equal 49 days, or 7 complete weeks. We understand the *omer*, or *counting the omer* as the days between the two holidays leading up to the day the Torah was given on Mount Sinai.

Lag made up of the Hebrew letters *lamed* and *gimel* equals the number 33. So 33 days from the second day of Passover is known as *Lag B'Omer* or the 33rd day of the counting of the *omer*. (It falls on May 6-7 this year.) As you know, the ancient Israelites were very reliant on agriculture and

this holiday is no different. Israelites were forbidden to use any of their spring barley crops until after an *omer*, or 3.6 liters of barley was given as an offering to the Temple. And from that day on "you shall count off seven weeks..." (Lev. 23:15-16). This gave rise to the counting of the *omer*.

The seven weeks of the *omer* are considered a mournful time, when no celebrations are to take place. This custom is observed in orthodox and many conservative Jewish families and congregations. The Talmud teaches that a terrible plague struck Rabbi Akiva's students and killed many of them. But on the 33rd day of the *omer*, *Lag B'Omer*, the dying stopped. So, on this day weddings, b'nai mitzvot and other Jewish cel-

ebrations are allowed during an otherwise solemn period. *Shavuot* (the Hebrew word for weeks) marks the end of the counting of the *omer* and commemorates the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai.

Dairy meals are traditionally served on *Shavuot*, but why? No one really knows for sure, but one common explanation is that Moses received the Torah on Saturday, *Shabbat*, and prior to this the Jews did not know how to slaughter animals in a kosher way. Since it was *Shabbat*, they could not start slaughtering that day, *Shavuot*, and could only eat dairy products, fruits and vegetables. So this year on *Shavuot*, May 23-24, enjoy some cheese stuffed blintzes, some noodle kugel, some cheesecake, or other Jewish dairy delights!



Leah Apothaker leads our Shabbat service, April 10

Learning With Leah by Cynthia Gingold

For those of you who missed the adult learning workshop on Saturday, April 11, you truly missed one of the most thought-provoking experiences I've had in a very long time. Leah Apothaker, our ISJL fellow, provided us with text from Torah. Two pieces told the story of creation from different parts of Genesis. Each one had different tweaks, offering much discussion. Thank you, Leah!!!



ISJL Fellow Leah Apothaker and TBI President Alvin Gingold teach Religious School, April 12 | photos by Cynthia Gingold

A VERY SPECIAL FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICE

On the evening of May 22nd, the children of our Religious School will conduct the Shabbat service.

The service will start at 7:00 pm and will end a little bit before 8:00 pm.

Please make every effort to attend. We will have a special oneg, too.

SISTERHOOD FUNDRAISER DRAWS A CROWD

Late last month the TBI Sisterhood sponsored their first-ever Art Auction fundraiser. Managed by State of the Art, a professional art auction company specializing in fundraising for nonprofit organizations, people were treated to a wide range of fine art. Well-known artists like Picasso, Monet, Arp, Dali, Scott, Kinkade, Disney and many more were offered at starting bids almost anyone could afford. No matter what your taste in art, it was available at the right bid.

To entice bidders, members of the Sisterhood served a variety of hors d'oeuvres and sweet treats accompanied by a glass of champagne to make the evening more festive (and maybe to spur on higher bids). Eric Steiner, auctioneer, has many years of experience in his trade and shared some of his knowledge with us so we could make more informed choices while bidding. Included among the works were some by Jewish artists like Tarkay and Shalom of Safed.

The Sisterhood was most fortunate to receive a generous donation of art work from Aviva and John Mal-lary, some of which were offered at auction at 100% commission for the Sisterhood. Otherwise, the Sisterhood was contracted to receive only a portion of other art sales. In addition, an amount was guaranteed by the auction house if a minimum number of people attended the auction. The excitement of the Saturday night auction was followed by a Sunday morning "second look" where people were able to make a direct offer on any piece of art that did not sell the night before.

Events such as these only work if many hands dig in and make it work. And many people offered their time and energy to make it work: donating art, cleaning frames and art glass, making and/or donating food items, organizing, setting up and taking down tables and art, collecting money, welcoming

people at the door and all of the other tasks that are required for a successful event.

Thank you to Heather Mewhinney, Joan Prows and Anne Miller for organizing all of the food and beverages. Thanks to Nathan and Anne Miller for granting us the beautiful venue at Harbour Village. Thanks to Marsha Kraselsky for offering a place for the auctioneer and crew to stay overnight. Thanks to the entire Sisterhood membership for selling tickets, putting up flyers and posters and sending out invitations. Thanks to the men of TBI for helping with set-up and tear-down. Thanks to the Tuvyana brothers – Judah and Benjamin – for their muscle and help showing the art. Thank you to all the other TBI members who donated art to be sold on Sunday. And thanks to those who took a chance and bid on some fine art to help a good cause. We hope you enjoyed it!

More photos to come!



MAY CALENDAR

SUN	05/03	9:30 am	Religious School
FRI	05/08	7:00 pm	Bar Mitzvah of Benjamin Tuvyana with Rabbi Baroff - <i>oneg to follow</i>
SAT	05/09	10:00 am 7:00 pm	Bar Mitzvah of Benjamin Tuvyana with Rabbi Baroff - <i>oneg to follow</i> Havdalah on the Beach with Rabbi Baroff
SUN	05/10		No Religious School - HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY 10:00 am Brunch with Rabbi Baroff
WED	05/13	6:00 pm	Temple Board of Directors Meeting
SUN	05/17	9:30 am	Religious School - last day of school year
WED	05/20	6:00 pm	Temple Sisterhood Meeting
FRI	05/22	7:00 pm	Shabbat Service with Sunday School children - <i>oneg to follow</i>
MON	05/25		MEMORIAL DAY
SUN	05/31	9:30 am	Religious School End-of-Year Picnic

A HUGE THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEER FOODIES

Someone once said that the history of the Jews consists of the following elements: our enemies hate us, they try to wipe us out, we win....let's eat! And the Temple B'nai Israel congregation provides proof, at least of the eating portion of that history.

The Co-Editors of the *Azoy*, on behalf of the entire congregation, past and present, wish to publicly thank Lois Oswald and her merry crew of bakers, stuffers, roasters, matzah-ball rollers and table setters. The Foodie Crew has consisted of many different women but the regulars have been Anne Miller, Aviva Mallary, Liz Berman and Marilyn Nations.



These women have overseen and made sure that every Passover Seder is complete with gefilte fish, horse radish, boiled/roasted eggs, hand-made matzah balls and that every table is set for the festive meal. They have also ensured that every fall, the break-the-fast meal is filled with delectable and sweet favorites to end our yearly atonement. For about 30 years Lois and her happy crew have delivered without fail!

And now, they are “throwing in the kitchen towels.” It is with much appreciation that we say a heartfelt **Thank You** to each and every one of you. The “towel” has been passed to the TBI Sisterhood who are learning from the best. Lois has organized and recorded her methods in folders and on a modern jump drive, and happily given the information to Sisterhood members for future Seders and other feasts. Congregants can be assured of continued edible celebrations. Anyone who misses their historical role in the kitchen is welcome to help.

Richard Baroff	<i>Rabbi</i>	Nate Mewhinney	<i>Trustee</i>
Alvin Gingold	<i>President</i>	Stephen Sickerman	<i>Trustee & Azoy Editor</i>
Pam Sutton	<i>Vice-President</i>	Stephen Theberge	<i>Trustee</i>
Mike Starkman	<i>Treasurer</i>	Lori Zipes	<i>Trustee</i>
Sarah Farkas	<i>Secretary & Azoy Editor</i>	Cynthia Gingold	<i>Religious School Director</i>
Lisa Rahn	<i>Sisterhood President</i>	Leah Apothaker	<i>ISJL Fellow</i>

MAY JOYS & REMEMBRANCES

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

- 04/13** **RUDOLPH F. RIGANO** - FATHER OF MARY STARKMAN
- 05/03** **JOSEPH KIMMEL** - GRANDFATHER OF HELAINE NORMAN
- 05/06** **BEATRICE WETCHLER** - MOTHER OF GAYLE PAINTER
- 05/28** **FLORENCE PEIROS** - GRANDMOTHER OF STEPHEN SICKERMAN

BIRTHDAYS

- | | | | |
|-------|---------------|-------|----------------|
| 04/07 | MARY STARKMAN | 05/13 | MIRIAM GILBERG |
| 05/01 | JUDITH SCOTT | 05/14 | JOEY SOSTHEIM |
| 05/10 | SARAH FARKAS | 05/18 | LOIS OSWALD |
| 05/12 | JILL GINIGER | 05/29 | ARTHUR NAGLER |



NSA Holocaust Remembrance by Sarah Farkas

In April, the Naval Support Activity in Panama City Beach sponsored a program honoring the victims of the Holocaust. This year's theme, "Across the Generations," stressed the importance of this awful period of our history being remembered so that it is never repeated by future generations. Unfortunately, man's inhumanity to fellow men and women has occurred more than several times since WWII.

To increase the meaning of that murderous history, two people shared their personal stories, stories that emphasized just how close those events really are. Keynote speakers Barbara Shykoff and Mike Starkman both lost family members in the Holocaust and both shared stories of escape and survival. By naming names and relating

their personal thoughts and feelings, Barbara and Mike brought the reality of the Nazi horror to the forefront.

Students from the Covenant Christian School in Panama City wrote poems reflecting their own understanding and feelings about the Holocaust. Many were quite moving and revealed thoughtful perspectives on genocide. Lori Zipes beautifully sang a prayer for the departed, *El Malei Rachamim*. Seven candles were lit, one by one: six candles memorializing the 6 million Jews who were murdered and a seventh candle to honor all the other souls who were killed for being "different," whether politically, religiously, sexually, mentally, or socially.

The US National Holocaust Memorial

Museum provided photos of real persons who suffered during the Holocaust, whether in concentration camp, forced labor camp, ghettos or other horrors. A photo was placed on each seat accompanied by a name, birth date and country of origin. A board with matching names and photos allowed us to learn what fate befell each. Some perished, others survived. Real people. Real stories. Never Again!



photos by Cynthia Gingold

A Remembrance - by Leah Apothaker, ISJL Fellow & special reporter to The Azoy

Every afternoon, after lunch, I sit at my desk and open up the *New York Times* – well I open up my web browser and visit [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com). I have a few sections I like to keep up on. I typically start by reading through a few articles in the politics section, then visit arts, then education, opinion, and wrap up with health. But the other day I clicked on obituaries and learned that Elio Toaff died.

Though the name was unfamiliar to me, I saw that he was the long-time chief rabbi of Rome, so I clicked on the article. I want to share some of the things I learned about this incredible man.

When he died on April 20, Rabbi Toaff was 99 years old. As a young man during World War II, he joined the resistance movement in Italy and helped shepherd Italian Jews to safety. The Times reported that Elio was captured by the Nazis in 1943, but escaped while digging what would have been his own grave.

After the War, he moved to Venice where he served as a rabbi before becoming the Chief Rabbi of Rome in the early 1950s. Under his leadership, Catholic and Jewish relations in Italy and Vatican City improved. The rabbi worshipped with Pope John Paul II and oversaw the first papal visit to a Jewish prayer space.

During my junior year of high school, my mom was doing business in Rome and took me with her for a week of sightseeing. I was so excited for this trip – I took Latin in high school and much of my studies in those courses focused on the Forum and the Palatine Hill. I could have spent all week reveling in Roman history. But on the third day of our trip, my mom wanted me to get a taste of the Jewish history as well. So she and I visited the Roman Ghetto. As our tour guide explained, the ghetto was established in the 1550s and all Roman Jews were to move to the area. There were gates which opened and closed according to a curfew and non-Jews rarely, if ever, patronized the businesses within the ghetto's walls. The ghetto and its gate became a symbol for Jewish oppression in Italy.

But in 1870, the ghetto was demolished and construction began on The Great Synagogue of Rome. Our tour ended in this remarkable building. Full of gold and silver, vibrant art, and a collection of Judaica, The Great Synagogue is now a symbol for eased relations between Jewish residents of Rome and their mostly Catholic neighbors. The Synagogue operates tours and history lessons for tourists like me and my mom, but they still hold services twice daily and a full range of holiday observances. Rabbi Toaff served this congregation for nearly 50 years.

So often when I think of important Jewish voices, especially for pluralism, I only think of Americans and Israelis. When I think of magnificent synagogues or historically significant places I've worshiped, I think of places in the United States and Israel. It is almost like I have blinders on, distancing the important contributions of Jews outside of my periphery. Rabbi Toaff was a remarkable Jewish man and one I wish I'd known about during his life, rather than only in his passing. His life and contributions serve as a reminder to me that there are people making significant contributions within and on behalf of the Jewish community all over the world – from New York to the Deep South to Rome.

