



Temple B'nai Abraham

Temple B'nai Abraham
President – Robin Affrime

The Temple Shofar
Rabbi - Julie Pfau

Sarah Seidel Sisterhood
President - Faith Hupfl

5770 TISHREI-CHESHVAN

OCTOBER 2009

Messages from our President

It was wonderful to see so many familiar faces at High Holiday services. It was a time to renew relationships within our community, and to welcome many new families and guests.

For me the High Holy Days are a time of renewal, a time to both look back at the year behind me and to look ahead at the year to come. Looking back gives me the opportunity to think about who I was last year. Did I meet the goals I set for myself? Did I treat my friends, family, and acquaintances fairly? And the year to come... What are my hopes and dreams? What do I want for myself, my family, my community? I have been doing a lot of soul searching to answer these questions for myself, as I imagine many of you have also been doing.

Kudos to Rabbi Julie Pfau and Lori Feldstein Gardner for a wonderful High Holiday experience. The services I attended were spiritual, tuneful and thought provoking. For me they set the tone for the coming year. I also want to thank Sid Morginstin for coordinating all of the services, Mindy Fink for being his assistant, Len Klempner, for lending his voice and expertise to services, and Mike Rosen for ordering and distributing tickets. Thank you also to Karen Nissim, and Sheila Lamonsoff for preparing the oneg on Friday night and Elaine Trackman and Eileen Gale for providing the kiddish on Saturday afternoon. I would also like to extend my thanks to Rita and Karen Nissim for their hard work in organizing and managing the Break the Fast. Thanks too, to all of the devoted congregants and guests who helped them to clean up afterwards. That's always one of the toughest parts, so thanks for hanging around. Each of you, in your own way, played an important role in the making our High Holiday Day experience. Thank you.

Robin Affrime

For those of you who joined us for High Holiday services you know that Rabbi Julie and her assistant, Rabbi Lori started us off in the New Year with beautiful prayers, poems, songs and thought provoking sermons. We had the opportunity to shed the wrongs done to us and by us in the old year and we welcomed the new year with hope and enthusiasm.

On Friday night, October 2, we continued to celebrate by embracing the holiday of Sukkot with a community pot luck dinner. We had a wonderful turn-out with more than 30 adults and children. We formed the tables into a giant family dining table so that we could enjoy each other the way you would at a family, holiday meal. The delicious supper was followed by prayers and singing. Congregants had an opportunity to enjoy the Sukkah, and we passed around the etrog so that everyone could take pleasure in the citrusy scent of the fruit.

This year the High Holiday pledge cards were mailed to you. It is not our usual tradition, but sometimes things happen for the best, and maybe receiving your pledge card in the mail has given you time to think about what Temple B'nai Abraham means to you, and your family. We're not fancy or large, but I think we have a lot of heart. And perhaps that is what has drawn you to become a member. I know that is what struck the Affrime family the first time we visited for a Friday night service. I ask you to remember what has drawn you to Temple B'nai Abraham when making your generous High Holiday pledge.

Pledges can be accompanied by a check or arrangements can be made with Mike Rosen if you wish to use your credit card. L'Shanah Tovah. I wish you health, joy and prosperity in the coming year.

Robin Affrime

**WELCOME TO
OUR NEW
MEMBERS**



Brian & Cathy Carlis, and son Ruben
12 Hansom Drive, Columbus, NJ 08022
609-291-0993 cacarlis@comcast.net

Paper copies of the Temple Shofar can be picked up at the Temple each month. If you require a paper copy mailed to you each month, please let us know.



Temple B'nai Abraham is affiliated with
the Jewish Reconstruction Federation.

www.jrf.org

Temple B'nai Abraham Officers

Officers:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| President | Robin Affrime |
| Executive Vice President | Charlie Weiss |
| Religious Vice President | Sid Morginstin |
| Financial Vice President | Mike Rosen |
| Recording Secretary | Susan Giachetti |
| Past President | Betsy Ramos |

Trustees:

| | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Religious School Chair | Linda Osman |
| Membership Chair | Rhea Goldman |
| Building Chair | Eileen Gale |
| Adult Education Chair | Kim Aubry |

Yahrzeit List

October 2

Noah Bloom, maternal grandfather of Ida Reichlin
Fred Gutstein, husband of Lillian Gutstein
Ida Kushner, mother of Sol Kushner
Nissim Nissim, father of Martin Nissim
Molly Schaffer, mother of Rhoda Kessler

October 16

Paul Goldfarb, step-father of Charyl Morginstin
Mervin Groveman, husband of Seena Groveman
Howard Sheldon Sacks, father of Faith Hupfl
Elsie Sternfeld, mother of Mildred Josephson

October 23

Myrna Morris, wife of Ronald Morris

October 30

Walter Harrison, husband of Renee Harrison
Gertrude Herzog, mother of Madge Rosen

If there is a name that you would like added to the synagogue's yahrzeit list, please contact Sid Morginstin at 609-298-2891. You will receive a card annually reminding you of your yahrzeit, and the name will be announced at services at which time you will be able to recite Kaddish.

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Rabbi's Corner

The Spoon River Anthology is a collection of poems about the fictional people of a town called Spoon River, written as if they were epitaphs on their tombstones. When I was in High School, this book was used in one of the required literature courses. Most of us, at that age, didn't really get it. Many of us had grandparents who were still living, and for the most part, death was something in movies or something that might have happened to some of our pets. It was a theory, and a distant one at that. The teacher would try to highlight epitaphs that we might relate to – ones that might highlight that we youth too could fall victim to illness, accident, crime, or suicide. For example, the epitaph of Johnnie Sayre:

*FATHER, thou canst never know
The anguish that smote my heart
For my disobedience, the moment I felt
The remorseless wheel of the engine
Sink into the crying flesh of my leg.
As they carried me to the home of widow Morris
I could see the school-house in the valley
To which I played truant to steal rides upon the trains.
I prayed to live until I could ask your forgiveness--
And then your tears, your broken words of comfort!
From the solace of that hour I have gained infinite happiness.
Thou wert wise to chisel for me:
"Taken from the evil to come."*

Readings like this didn't sink in – we were at that age characterized by a sense of invulnerability. How many of us can think back to our teenage years and not be somewhat horrified at the risks we took? Racing a friend on a main street at 75 miles an hour did not seem life-threatening when I was in 11th grade – it was merely something that could get us in trouble if the police or our parents found out. Reading epitaphs in *The Spoon River Anthology* did not succeed in getting the message across that we were mortal, that we too would someday lie in a grave with a headstone. We just thought the readings were strangely morbid and a bit creepy. We certainly didn't spend time in deep reflection about what we would want our headstones to say someday and what lessons we would want later generations to learn from them.

"On Rosh Hashanah it is written, and on Yom Kippur it is sealed" – a refrain in the *Unetaneh Tokef* prayer that we repeatedly sing between examples of dire events that might befall people in the coming year. Written and sealed in a book that sounds as grim as *The Spoon River Anthology*. And who does this writing and this sealing? According to *Unetaneh Tokef*, God is the sole author, printer, and reader of this book: "It is you who shall write, and you who seal what is written, you who shall read..." And what is the aim of this book? Judgment:

... all who come into the world
pass before you like sheep for the shepherd –
for, just as a shepherd numbers the flock,
passing the herd by the staff,
so do you make us pass by before you,
and [you] number, and count, and determine the life,
one by one, of all who have life-breath within.
You decide for each creature its cycles of life,
and you write down its destined decree.

On Rosh Hashanah, all is written and revealed,
and on Yom Kippur, the course of every life is sealed!

God's activity and the purpose of the book bring a layer of potential discomfort that is lacking in *Spoon River*. Because of such imagery, the God of the Days of Awe can sometimes feel imposing and frightening – making judgments that feel arbitrary or even capricious. And yet sometimes we are almost enthusiastic in our singing of the refrain: "On Rosh Hashanah it is written, and on Yom Kippur it is sealed." Why do we affirm this belief? Is it because the fates described are distant from us? Perhaps it feels like a remote list of theoretical causes of death.

The *Unetaneh Tokef* prayer is supposed to jar us out of our complacency, break open those walls that defend us against facing the reality of death. But I think it fails to make us open up to this truth because the imagery of God is disturbing. It is emotionally easier to tune out – especially when it is being sung in Hebrew. We can notice the lovely melodies and join in on the refrains, while disconnecting from the meaning of the words. Because who wants to think that God might arbitrarily decree that they will die by the beast or by strangulation in the coming year?! And who wants to internalize a message that God decreed their past misfortunes. Or that God decreed the death of someone they loved in the prior year? Or even someone they were ambivalent about? Or maybe even someone they didn't like very much, but nevertheless had a long history with?

During the Days of Awe, we are supposed to take a moment to step out of the denial that often characterizes our lives and confront the reality that all of our lives are *so very fragile*. In the midst of facing this frightening and painful reality, what do we need from God? Is it shofars blaring in the heavens, angels thrown into a terror, and a shepherd-God who holds a selection to determine who will live or die? Or do we need the shepherd-God of Psalm 23 who walks with us even in the valley of the shadow of death, who leads us beside tranquil waters, and who restores our souls?

I love to sing *Unetaneh Tokef* – it has so many beautiful melodies. I love to sing *Unetaneh Tokef*, but I do not love the God depicted in the prayer. Although the imagery of this prayer is so dominant during the High Holidays, I am grateful that there are other strands in our liturgy, and I would like to emphasize the imagery for God used in *those* prayers,

because I think they can offer us comfort and help us feel more able to honestly face the pain that goes along with our living and dying.

I spoke on Erev Rosh Hashanah about the 13 Attributes prayer with its imagery of God as compassionate, patient, tender, and forgiving. Many of us are also well familiar with the refrain of *Avinu Malkeynu*, in which we call on God to deal graciously with us and answer us even when we might not feel deserving.

But my favorite is one that is often skipped entirely – *HaNeshamah Lach*. The prayer begins: "The soul is yours, the body is your handiwork, be sparing, please, to all that you have made. The soul is yours, the body, yours, O Fount of Mercy, act in keeping with your name..." It continues: "For your sake, God, not for our own, please act – behold us standing here in need & desolation. May you favor patience toward a windblown leaf, be reconciled to us, who are but dust and ash..."

Such a powerful image of the human condition – we are each of us a windblown leaf. I wrote a poem a few years ago after meditating on this prayer:

*twisting turning twining spinning
sometimes change
feels like
a brittle leaf
dangling
over a chasm
gauging the breeze
trying to choose
the right moment
to let go*

None of us wants to admit that we are so very brittle or that we are subject to the wind. Most people like to maintain the illusion of control – as if the autumn leaf dangling on a branch can really decide never to fall. Every human being must ultimately die, and throughout our lives we are confronted time and again with the need to change even when change is not desired.

Unetaneh Tokef is right – our lives are fragile, and no human being will experience only good things year after year. Does it make us feel better to think that what happens to us is planned and ultimately in someone's control? The idea must feel comforting to some people. But I prefer an alternative. The God depicted by *Unetaneh Tokef* seems, to me, like the kind of being that would yank such a brittle leaf off the branch, step on it, and grind it into dust. But the God I experience from the prayer *HaNeshamah Lach* is more like a botanist – the kind of being that would walk through the woods with great care so as not to inadvertently crush any form of life. The God I experience from praying *HaNeshamah Lach* would notice and cherish every autumn leaf – taking note of its lovely color, the delicate pattern of even its tiniest

veins – and making notes in a field journal so that such beauty will not be forgotten.

To me, *this* is the book of life that we talk about during the High Holidays. It isn't God's book of who will live and who will die. It is the book of our lives – a record of who we are. The field-journal of God the botanist – in which are recorded our silliest moments, most loving acts, deepest feelings and longings; but also our cruelest words, neglects, blunders. We don't do *teshuvah*, *tefillah* and *zedakah* to offset the bad things in the record and get us out of a harsh decree in the coming year, we do these things so that our lives will bring beauty to the world, so that someday, when we are gone, others will feel comforted by cherished memories instead of being more deeply pained by unresolved wounds.

The Book of Life is also referred to as the Book of Remembrance – reminding us that our lives and our actions leave a record. God is not the sole reader of the book of our lives; nor is God the only writer in our book. Our own hands inscribe that record on the lives and memories of all those we encounter. In *HaNeshamah Lach*, we ask God to be gentle with us, whose lives are so very fragile, and we need to remember to treat those around us in the same way. We are each like a brittle windblown leaf. Our lives and our emotions are so very fragile. Let us all be sparing with each other. Let us be gentle with all of the delicate lives we encounter.

It is easier sometimes to pretend that we, and those around us, are strong and invulnerable. It can feel easier sometimes to run away from death and loss. But what good does it do? We only end up isolating ourselves and reducing the lives of those around us by our emotional absence. Another epitaph in *The Spoon River Anthology*, of Samuel Gardner, concludes: *... the branches of a tree
Spread no wider than its roots.
And how shall the soul of a man
Be larger than the life he has lived?*

We have to risk digging in deep enough so our roots can spread, so we can reach out to others, so our lives can be expansive, and our souls can be strong enough to endure even in the face of our ultimate vulnerability. *Our lives are so very fragile, but they can be achingly beautiful.*

What would you inscribe in the book of your life in the coming year? What will your actions engrave on the memories of those that you encounter? Will you give God the botanist something lovely to cherish in that field journal? And, just as important, will you take the time to peruse the books of others' lives – to look even when the book has a sad ending – so you can appreciate their beauty, and perhaps forgive them for the ways they were not always good writers? None of us always are good writers. That's why we pray with *HaNeshamah Lach* for God, and those we encounter, to be sparing. To hold us gently and comfort us as we endure the winds of change and loss.

Sarah Seidel Sisterhood

The next Sisterhood Meeting will be held at the Temple **Monday, October 12, 2009** at 7:30 pm. The Sisterhood is hosting a shower in honor of the new kitchen sink. There will also be a Sisterhood Board Meeting at 7:00 pm, prior to the Program Event. The hostesses assigned to this event are Patricia Light-Tolomeo & Nina Glanz.

Sisterhood members who attended the last meeting have selected specific items to bring in for the "newest addition" to the Temple's kitchen. Anyone who was unable to attend the September meeting may choose one of the remaining items and join in the fun. Please e-mail or call Phyllis with your selection to avoid duplication. (pchudoff@hotmail.com 499-3217).

Green and cream are the colors. Wrap your gift and bring it to the October meeting. Over coffee/tea and desserts we'll take turns opening each others gifts to the Temple.

Pot holders, oven mitts, kitchen dish cloths - Janice Konigsberg
Rubber gloves - Ellen Wehrman
Dish drainer and pad - Mimi Geller
Magnetic note pads and liner for sink drawers - Faith Hupfl
Dishwashing liquid - Karen Nissim
Ice bucket and tongs - Elaine Trackman
Manual can opener - Renee Harrison
Measuring spoons - Kim Aubry
Measuring cups - Debby Weiss
Knives - Marcia Rosen & Linda Osman
Two cake servers - Charyl Morginstin
Veggie peeler - Sandy SchwartzBird
Bridge tables - Eileen Gale, Robin Affrime, Evelyn Rothman, & Phyllis Chudoff

We still need: dish sponges, small and large cutting boards, utensil divider for the sink, containers for hand lotion and dishwashing liquid, bottle washer for the coffee pots, pretty toilet brush (for bathroom), utensil holders (for knives, forks, and spoons) for serving at Onegs, and money for a new cabinet.

IN OUR KITCHEN

*There is no bride and groom,
Just a brand new sink and an old broom
There will be no wedding, just a shower
No chuppah, not even a bower.
As we begin the Sisterhood year,
The stuff in the kitchen, I fear
Needs an upgrade or two,
But we can't do it without you.
So come to the next meeting bearing gifts and good
cheer with great expectations for the New Year.*

Elaine Trackman

Remember the Ha Ha Jar? It started way back when as a way to help make "Your donor". We have brought it back to life, with a different twist. Our jar has a face, thanks to ET, and all sisterhood members' names are in it. The donation is \$1.00 from each member. If your name is pulled out and you are not at the meeting we all say HA! HA! Oh, did I forget to mention that the money is now divided 50/50 between the person who is at the meeting when their name is called and the Sisterhood. At our first meeting HA!HA! went out to Noreen Rossos, Madge Rosen and Marlene Lavine, before Phyliss Chudoff's name was called and she got to keep half of the money.

Please don't feel obligated to donate the money you won back to the Sisterhood. That is not the purpose of the new jar.

FROM RELIGIOUS CHAIR:

Thanks to Shiri Haines, 5770 calendars are available at the Temple.

The results of our annual inventory show that we are missing some prayer books. Please check to see if you have any at home and please return them. If you still need them, please let me know how many you have. All members are free to borrow any books at any time -- except the AITZ CHAIM BIBLES and the 150 YEAR CALENDAR. Please let me know when you barrow them so I can keep an accurate inventory.

Thank you,
Sid Morginstin

Supermarket Gift Card Program

Please remember to purchase Supermarket gift cards for Acme and Shop Rite. This fundraiser is ongoing throughout the year. The gift cards are purchased at dollar for dollar value. The Temple receives 5% making this is a great way to support our temple. Contact Marsha and Joel Dowshen and they will see that you will receive them in a timely manner. 609-298-5306.



You can send your checks directly to the Dowshens at 502 Farnsworth Avenue, Bordentown, NJ 08505 with your order amount and supermarket noted.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL NEWS

Parents are requested to bring healthy snacks for their assigned snack month. Examples are cheese sticks, pretzels, baked chips, goldfish, raisins, animal crackers, popcorn, bottled water, 100% fruit juices. Please avoid anything with peanut or peanut butter for our kids with food allergies. The snack parent is also requested to bring one box of hand wipes and hand sanitizer. Please be sure not to send a sick child to Religious School.



Snack List for 2009

Osman Family - October
Deitch Family - November
Weiss Family - December

Please call Susan Giachetti
609-259-7348 with any questions.

Donations

Temple

In Memory of

Martin Nissim by Dr. & Mrs. Nicholas Rossos, Shryle & Sol Kushner, Ellen & Steven Benowitz, Mark & Lois Meisel, Helen Campbell, Marcella Kaplan, Ellen & Myron Samuel, Bette Campbell, Steven C. Isaacson, DMD, and Mr. & Mrs. P. Granaldi
Robert Hodes by Michael Scolaro & Randye Bloom
Gertrude Rosen by Madge and Gerry Rosen
Charles Stein and Riata Rhodes by Randye Bloom and Michael Scolaro
Myrna Morris by Ronald Morris

Ellen Benowitz and Eileen Gale made donations towards a memorial plaque for Marty

Mimi Geller donated a prayerbook in memory of Marty Nissim

Sisterhood

In Memory of

Rose King by Mimi Geller, Eileen Gale, Phyllis Chudoff, Ellen Wiener, Renee Harrison, Sid and Charyl Morginstin, Rita Nissim, Elaine and Jay Trackman, Phyllis and Is Kamer, Randye Bloom and Mike Scolaro, and Dr. and Mrs. S. Lavine

Get Well

Shyrla Kushner from Charyl and Sid Morginstin
Madge Rosen from Charyl and Sid Morginstin

The beautiful flowers that adorned our bima for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur were donated by Andrew and Ronny Smulian in memory of their parents, Dr. and Mrs. Nathan Smulian. We appreciate their yearly generosity.

OCTOBER 2009

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|---|---|
| | | | | 1 HEBREW SCHOOL | 2 Erev Sukkot Sukkot Community Dinner 6:30 pm 6:23 pm Candle lighting | 3 Sukkot I |
| 4 Sukkot II HEBREW SCHOOL | 5 Sukkot III | 6 Sukkot IV | 7 Sukkot V | 8 Sukkot VI HEBREW SCHOOL | 9 Hoshana Raba Service 7:30 pm 6:12 pm Candle lighting | 10 Shmini Atzeret |
| 11 Simchar Torah Service 10:00 am HEBREW SCHOOL | 12 COLUMBUD DAY | 13 | 14 | 15 HEBREW SCHOOL | 16 6:01 pm Candle lighting | 17 Service 9:30 am |
| 18 HEBREW SCHOOL Rosh Chodesh I | 19 Rosh Chodesh II | 20 | 21 | 22 HEBREW SCHOOL | 23 Service 7:30 pm 5:51 pm Candle lighting | 24 |
| 25 HEBREW SCHOOL | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 HEBREW SCHOOL | 30 Service 7:30 pm Honoring Sisterhood 5:42 pm Candle lighting | 31 |

♥ Cookie Contest! ♥ Cookie Contest! ♥ Cookie Contest! ♥ Cookie Contest!

DO YOU BAKE THE BEST COOKIES IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD?

Or do you know someone who does?

To enter on-line, visit our website

<http://www.mycookiesarebetterthanyourcookies.org>

The Sarah Seidel Sisterhood of Bordentown* is having a

COOKIE BAKING CONTEST

to determine – once and for all – who bakes the best cookies in the whole wide world!

Proceeds will also benefit T.A.S.K. – The Trenton Area Soup Kitchen!

Enter for a chance to win up to \$700 CASH, PRIZES, & BRAGGING RIGHTS TO THE TITLE "BEST COOKIE BAKER IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD!"

Cookie Categories:

- **General**
- **Special Diet** (Cookies designed for people on a special diet, such as low cal or gluten free)
- **Kids Creations** (Children 16 and under)

\$20 to enter adult categories before 10/12

\$10 to enter Kids Creations

To enter on-line, visit our website

<http://www.mycookiesarebetterthanyourcookies.org>

To enter by mail, send your name, email address, phone#, and mailing address, along with your categories of entry and check to:

COOKIE CONTEST

PO BOX 245

BORDENTOWN NJ 08505

Please make checks payable to Sarah Seidel Sisterhood

609-841-8965

Contest Info

WHEN: Sunday, Oct 18th

WHERE: Rutgers EcoComplex
(Right off Exit 52 Columbus Exit of Rt 295, across from Liberty Lake. 1200 Florence Columbus Rd)

COOKIE DROP-OFF: 8-10AM

\$5 ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT

COOKIE PARTY: 3-5PM

*The Sarah Seidel Sisterhood is affiliated with Temple Bnai Abraham of Bordentown, NJ, a Reconstructionist Jewish Congregation.

♥ Cookie Contest! ♥ Cookie Contest! ♥ Cookie Contest! ♥ Cookie Contest! ♥