



OUR TEMPLE

January 2007

Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom

Vol. 43, No. 5

Notes from the president

Make a New Year's resolution to get involved

By **Scott Bram**
President

Chanukah has come and gone. I hope everyone had a joyous holiday.

This month is often the start of the cold and dreary wintertime. Now is ac-

tually a good time to reflect on where you are spiritually. It is also an opportunity to get a sense of your place in the Temple.

Are you as involved as you want to be? Do you come to services as often as you

should? Are there any programs coming up that you might enjoy?

Now is the time to adjust your schedule to accommodate these wishes. Plan ahead now so that you can participate more fully. A Happy Secular New Year to All.

From the Rabbi's study

It's time to return the favor

Anyone who has spent time around our building knows that it can be a very busy place. There are meetings, classes, services, and programs going on. It is a wonderful sight to see our building full of life.

Starting sometime this month or early in February, our building is going to become even busier than usual.

**Rabbi Brian
Michelson**

We will be welcoming in our neighbors from First Church

of the Brethren to share our building during their construction of a new church building. They will be building on the grass area that runs along Warwick Drive and up behind the homes on Vista Road.

The current church building will be torn down and a Rite Aid will take its place.

During our building process, Church of the

Brethren welcomed us in to use their building for services and some meetings. We can now return the favor as we welcome them to join us. They will be holding Sunday school and services at RCOS, and various meetings, as well. They will be using one of our extra classrooms as an office. In addition, a number of organizations that have met at Church of the Brethren will be meeting at the Temple.

What does this mean for the Temple family?

It means that there will be more cars in the parking lot on many days to accommodate all the activity. We may hear them singing hymns as we walk through the building and they will hear our students participating in the Religious School service we have on Sundays.

It will mean that we will have to pay attention to posted signs indicating where each

meeting is being held and a few of those embarrassing moments when we realize we have walked into the wrong room or the wrong meeting. If you are chairing a committee or having a meeting, it will be vital that you make sure that the office is aware to ensure that space has been set aside for you.

Finally, I think that sharing our building will be a wonderful way to bring our two congregations closer together as we explore some joint programming.

Church of the Brethren will be paying a modest rent, and they want to ensure that our hospitality does not have a negative impact on Temple finances.

Their half of the joint committee that negotiated the use of the Temple clearly expressed their gratitude at our openness to welcoming them while understanding the importance of dealing openly and honestly regarding finances.

The probable timeline will have the church with us until mid-October; however, there are usually delays or hiccups that get in the way of the best-laid plans, and I hope that all of us can make them feel welcome the entire time they are here.

It is my opinion, that with a little work and a little understanding, we can make the time that First Church of the Brethren is with us an enriching experience for us all.

January Highlights

Friday, Jan. 5 — Early Shabbat, 6 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 6 — Shabbat service, 10 a.m.

Jan. 7-14 — Temple hosts Interfaith Hospitality Network

Thursday, Jan. 11 — World of Jewish Music lecture, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 13 — Chavurah group, 4 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 20 — Tot Shabbat, 10 a.m.

Sunday, Jan. 21 — Brotherhood meeting, 9:30 a.m.

Friday, Jan. 26 — Grade 3 Shabbat and dinner, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 30 — Adult Hebrew lessons begin, 7 p.m.

Friday night services at 7:45 unless otherwise noted
Babysitting available for 7:45 Shabbat services.

Bulletin sponsored by
E. Jane Sher
in memory of Bernard Sher

Religious School News**Joint program to focus on feeding the hungry****By Judy Synnamon***Religious School administrator*

Our Religious School will be hosting our second Joint Program with the students from Keshet Zion on Tuesday, Jan. 16 from 4:15 to 6 p.m. The topic of the program will be "Feeding the Hungry." We are asking each student to bring paper products from home to donate to the Food Bank. (ie: tissues, napkins, toilet paper). A speaker from the Jewish Federation will talk to our students about the operation of the Food Bank, where the food comes from, how it is arranged, how it is disseminated and assigned to clients. The students will see

how much food a family of four actually receives.

This program is open to all students, from Grade 1 through Confirmation. If possible, parents are requested to stay during the program to help their children. After the presentation, the children will be decorating cloth bags for the Food Bank clients. They will also be making a dry soup mix for each client to take home.

On Jan. 27, the Third Grade will be conducting our Shabbat Service. The Service will be held at 6 p.m. There will be a Family Dinner at 7 p.m. Details for this event will follow.

Report cards will be sent home during the latter part of January.

With the start of 2007, I hope you take this opportunity to refer to the Student Handbook once again. Topics to review with your children would be the Discipline Policy and Dress Code. Please take a few moments to reinforce the rules cited in the handbook. The importance of reinforcing appropriate behaviors and dress in the synagogue will help us maintain the quality of the education and experiences for the students. Also, please be aware of our inclement weather policy for school closings as written in the handbook.

What does it mean to be a Reform Jew?

*An adult education course taught by Student Cantor
Leah Holland*

As RCOS approaches its 100th anniversary as a Reform congregation, take some time to become familiar with the ABC's of the Reform movement: URJ, UAHC, UPB, GOP, GOR, CCAR, ACC, HUC-JIR, and NFTY. Learn about the good old German guys who started the Reform Jewish "revolution"—Abraham Geiger, Israel Jacobson, Samuel Holdheim, and others. Engage in debates about kippot, keeping a kosher home, mixed marriage, and gender-sensitive language.

**Class will meet on Saturdays,
Jan. 20, Feb. 3, Feb. 24, March 3, and March 17
from noon to 1:30pm.**

Shabbat lunch will be served.

Cost of the course is \$60
(includes book, other course materials, and lunch).

It's not too late . . .

*to join the Junior Choir for the rest
of the school year!*

Choir rehearsals will be held on the following Sundays:
Jan. 21, Feb. 25, March 18 and April 29.

The choir will participate in services
Friday, Feb. 2 for Shabbat Shira
and Friday, May 18 for Confirmation.

*For more information, please contact Student Cantor
Leah Holland at cantor@ohebsholom.org*

Aleph isn't Tough Adult Hebrew Class

Five sessions starting

Tuesday, Jan. 30

7-9:00 PM

Class size is limited

**\$30 for members \$60 for non-members
(includes the cost of the textbook)**

Have you considered remembering the Temple in your will?

Focus on the Food Festival

2006 festival builds on past successes

By Jeri Kozloff

On Wrap-up Meeting day
the Board went all the way.
Thought outside the box
served bagels and lox
a delicious breakfast buffet.

Karen's report about money
was as sweet as apples and honey.
The bottom line
is mighty fine
All volunteers' faces were sunny.

We talked of how we learn,
more dollars we're sure to earn
We've ideas for next year
and have no fear
Our customers will return.

RCOS's 2006 Jewish Food and Cultural Festival was "wrapped up" in the perfect way: with food and festivity. The Board of Directors generously decided to thank the volunteers with breakfast for the meeting. Scott Bram and Ellen Azrael

donated funds and effort and everyone enjoyed bagels, smoked salmon, herring, pastry, and juices.

Now here's the news everyone's been waiting for – The Profit and its Allocation.

Festival net profit was \$17,349. This is several thousand dollars more than last year. Thanks to smart purchasing, food costs were lower and this kept expenses down. Pre-sold ticket revenue was up by \$1,500 and the program ad book earned \$5,349, an increase of \$1,100 from 2005. These facts tell us what to concentrate on in the future: efficient purchasing, advance ticket sales, and ads.

Then came what I think is the best part of the meeting: Allocation. The presence of Scott Bram and several RCOS officers and board members helped us make a decision that met the specific and overall needs of the congregation and gained the unanimous support of the volunteers who voted.

\$8,000 for the Student Cantor pro-

gram. This should cover more than half of its 2007-08 cost.

\$8,349 to reduce the principal of the mortgage. (Program book proceeds plus \$3,000)

\$200 to Mazon

\$800 to the Building fund for replacement reserve. These funds represent a "pay back" to the building fund for use of the facility and are a source of funds for equipment that benefits the festival.

We will continue the practice of retaining about \$5,000 in the savings account to take us from year to year.

Susan Gelb and Janine Ure moderated an informative and useful discussion of the many improvements made this year; everything from the brisket recipe to the location of the deli in the social hall. Volunteers offered lots of great suggestions for further efficiency and expansion of the event. Already thoughts are turning to Festival 2007 to be held Nov. 4.

SAVE THE DATE NOW!

Brotherhood News

A SCHONDAH!!

By Art Becker

THE NOVEMBER MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY ONLY ONE MEMBER, JERRY FOGELMAN, ASIDE FROM MARSHALL AND ME! The Rabbi attended for a while before leaving for Religious School and Scott Bram came at 10:00 for the speech!

The speaker, Doug Didyoung, a very dedicated and sincere gentleman who is a Lay Chaplin at Reading Hospital, gave a most interesting talk to the four of us. **It was a shame that more people did not**

have the pleasure of listening to him.

JANUARY SPEAKER: Dr. Timothy Blessing will speak about "THE FIRST NINE AND THE LAST NINE: THE RISE OF THE NOVICE PRESIDENCY". The first nine Presidents came from a completely different background than the last nine. Dr. Blessing will elaborate on that... should be very interesting.

The Date is Sunday, Jan. 21 at 9:30 a.m. . . .Lox, bagels, cream cheese, onions and pickled herring will be served. **Good talk, good food ... no kidding, what more**

would you want?

MEMBERSHIP: A Renewal/Recruitment Letter has been sent for 2007. **Join us!**

OFFICERS: We need a President, a Secretary and a Treasurer. Marshall has been President for four years. I served as President, also for four years. **Aren't there any guys out there who have the guts to take on a challenge?** If there are, they will have every assistance from Marshall and me to get up and running. We will both continue our "kitchen duties" for the breakfasts.

ABOUT OUR NEWSLETTER

Editor: Mark Nemirow

Assistant editor: Donna Oaks

To get an item in the bulletin, contact Mark at Marknem@aol.com or 610-370-2533, or contact the Temple office.

Deadline for February bulletin: Jan. 5

The Temple Online

www.ohebsholom.org

Office: office@ohebsholom.org

Rabbi Michelson: rabbi@ohebsholom.org

Bookkeeper Beth Bruck: bookkeeper@ohebsholom.org

Cantor Leah Holland: cantor@ohebsholom.org

**Rabbi's
Discretionary
Fund**

A donation has been received
from
Herb Karasin

In thanks for Rabbi's Talmud
class
Jill Haas

In memory of Vi Satinsky
Barbara & Michael Perilstein

In memory of Fred Coopersmith
Sandee & Neal Nevitt

In memory of Salmon Assayag
Renee and Harvey Seidel

**Shirley Jacobs
Religious School
Fund**

In memory of Janet Bender,
David Bender's mother
Norma & Marty Beckerman

In memory of Josephine
Lindenberg
Sandee & Neal Nevitt

In memory of Henry M.
Schneider
Murry & Nancy Knoblauch

Building Fund

In honor of the success of this
year's Food Festival
Sandra & Andrew Sigal

In memory of Frances
Beckerman's Yahrzeit
Norma & Marty Beckerman

In memory of Arthur Levinger
Norma & Marty Beckerman

A donation has been received
from
The Melvin S. Cutler Charitable
Foundation

General Fund

In honor of my family's
friendship with Paul & Joanne
Cohn
Pat Kraras Donahue

In honor of her family & friends
continued good health and
happiness
Leah Levin

In honor of our brother Al
Diamond's 85th birthday Dec. 1
Elaine Lustig & Rose Diamond

In memory of Janet Bender,
David's mother
David & Barbara Bender

**Sisterhood Florence
Frank Offering Fund**

To Mrs. Raie Fogelman for a speedy recovery
Mrs. Rhoda Rosenberg

To Mr. Gordon Kaye in memory of his father
Mr. and Mrs. Merlyn Jenkins

Kindly send Florence Frank Offering Fund contributions
to Mrs. Marilyn Frank, Phoebe Village, 9 Reading Ave.,
Wernersville, PA 19565; or Mrs. Shirley Friedman, 107
Primrose Lane, Wyomissing, PA 19610.

**The Jane Henry Memorial
Fund**

The Jane Henry Memorial Fund is not just a camp fund for youth. It
will help anyone in need, particularly young people.

In honor of Maxine Henry's special birthday
The Becks & the Stoudts

In memory of my niece Jane
Sylvia H. Gross

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**HOSPITALITY NETWORK
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

*The Temple is hosting a family the week of Jan.
7-14. If interested in helping out, contact Holly
or Janine at rcosihn@ecologyfund.net*

Perpetual Memorials

Jan. 1-6

Claire Dershwin
Louis S. Levy
Irving Bash
Helen Simmons
Samuel Frankel
Anna Baerncof
Benjamin W. Loeb

Ella Brok
Fannie Loeb
Sarah Fisher
Emanuel W. Loeb
Norman M Regner

Jan. 21-27

Carry Abrams
Maurice Meier
Leo Camp
Ida Salberg Rapp
Jacob Gernsheimer
Edmond E. Eschwege
Estela M. Cohen
William Crane
Julius Curson
Nettie Loeb
Bertha Loeb
Bessie Knoblauch
Morris Knoblauch

Jan. 7-13

Frieda Goldstein
Sidney Spinrad
Beth Frankel
Henrietta Weitzenkorn
Norman B. Dunitz
Josephine Meyers
Dora Lurio Greenberg
Adolph Loewenstein
Margaret Gilbert

Jan. 14-20

Pauline Friedman
Elaine Dunitz
Elias Schulhoff
Levi Weitzenkorn
Jonas Sondheim
Fred Katz
Goldie Natanblut

Jan. 28-31

Morris Weil
Leo J. Sondheim
Frances Steinberg
Rose Griesemer
Mayme Bock
Julius Goldstein

V'ahavta: Changing traditions

Excerpted and edited from a sermon delivered by Student Cantor Leah Holland Dec. 1.

By Leah Holland
Student cantor

Like most people, I feel as if I have an odd relationship with time during most of the days of my life. Some days, time seems to pass so slowly with absolutely no regard for whether I desire it to or not. On all other days, it seems to fly by, not allowing me time to process or cherish much of anything that has occurred in the minutes and seconds that are its building blocks. Today, as I stand here before you, I am engrossed in the feeling that time has passed so quickly. It has been 15 months since the first Shabbat that I stood before this congregation as your student cantor, and while I know that much learning and growth has occurred during that substantial period of time, I also wonder at times where all of that time has gone.

And yet, one of the bizarre things about time is that things that happened ages ago can be etched in our memories as if they occurred only moments ago. Such is my memory of my first Shabbat here in Reading. I can remember it as if it were yesterday. Besides being so incredibly nervous, so desperately wanting to do well, and wanting all of you to be pleased with whom you had been matched for at least the next year, I can recall the overwhelming sensation of feeling like a stranger in the midst of a community of worshippers. You see, each congregation anywhere in the world has their nuances — things that they do a little differently than anyone else — simply because that is their tradition, the way that they have been doing things for years, or the way that their rabbi or cantor or other leaders have taught them. In Hebrew, we call this a *minhag* — a tradition — and I think that, despite all of my nervousness, I expected to be confronted with *minhagim* that I was unfamiliar with, and thus, I would be unable to participate in certain sections of the service. I can clearly remember points in several prayers and other songs where I would be singing the melody one way as you, the congregation, would cast strange glances in my direction as if to say, Umm, that's not the way we do it. I smiled to myself in those moments and knew that I certainly had a lot to learn from being in this space and leading this holy

community in prayer.

While individual *minhagim*, traditions, are so rich and special and deserve to be held on to simply because they are this stunning preservation of an oral bit of history that might be lost otherwise, there is a fine line between preserving what might have been sung by some extraordinary European Jewish community that is no longer in existence and continuing to hold onto something that is simply a corruption of something that was authentic but somehow got lost along the way. Thus, there is one *minhag* that we have held onto here at Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom that, beginning tonight, I would like to propose we adapt. That *minhag* is the melody to which to chant the V'ahav'ta.

The V'ahav'ta, a standard part of any worship service included in the section entitled the "Sh'ma and its Blessings," is actually not a prayer that was written by a rabbi or a liturgical poet, but is directly taken from two books of the Torah, specifically Deuteronomy chapter 6, verses 5-9, and Numbers chapter 15, verses 40-41. It is the oldest prayer in our prayer service, listed by the rabbis in the earliest extant lists of what Jews were required to say each day as a part of their requirements of daily prayer. Other prayers in our service have melodies that are reminiscent of the mode of the service, which is the musical scale whose half step and whole step construction sets the tone for the service. The job of the each of those melodies in those different services is to help the congregation figure out what holiday or festival it is.

However, while the melodies to prayers change with holidays, festivals, and other occasions, this is not the case with the V'ahav'ta. It is always the same. The reason for this is because of its origin. So as not to corrupt the fact that the text was originally from the Torah, we are supposed to chant the text to the V'ahav'ta in our services using Torah trope. Our *minhag* here, though, has evolved into one where we are no longer true to the Torah trope. So, in a time when the rabbi, our religious school teacher Holly Michelson, and myself are working extremely hard to be certain that each and every one of our B'nei Mitzvah students knows Torah trope, I think it is important that we, as a congregation, set the example for our students of doing the work ourselves to at least learn the Torah trope for the V'ahav'ta. This will allow us,

as Jews, to walk into any congregation and pray the words of this prayer without any fear that we will not know how to participate in another congregation's version of the melody. It will afford us the opportunity to engage in the study of Torah together each and every Shabbat that we pray together, and as the Torah is so central to our lives as Jews, we are upholding one of the highest commandments by doing so.

We will also be setting an example for the future generations of this congregation that continuing our Jewish education throughout our lives is vital to our continuance as a people. Too often in our day and age, it has become the norm for Jewish education to end after B'nei Mitzvah, or Confirmation, or after graduation from high school. In order to ensure the survival of our people in the generations to come, we need to show those that come after us that being Jewish is so important to us that we are willing to study it and teach others about it for the rest of our lives. We all know the amazing depth and breadth of this phenomenal tradition that we have been blessed to have committed ourselves to, but we must breathe, act, and live in full awareness of the wonder of this sacred faith by learning and learning and learning until our last moment on this earth.

And so, we begin tonight with the V'ahav'ta. While it will take us several weeks to transition from the altered version of the trope that the congregation has been chanting for years to the actual Torah trope, we commit ourselves to doing so for the sake of the future generations of this thriving congregation. Please know that I am always available as a resource to either help make this transition easier for you in any way, to make a CD for you to work with at home, or sit with you over a cup of coffee to talk about Jewish music or prayer or anything else that you might be wrestling with.

As the darkness and chill of the winter months threaten to force us into spiritual darkness as well, may our congregations' recommitment to our education and growth and togetherness create the warmth that we need to sustain us, and may this act collectively renew our spirits and remind us how important it is to constantly rededicate ourselves to all that is important in our lives. May this be God's will.

RCOS Presents

A Taste of Judaism— for Your Unaffiliated Friends and Family

Ever wondered how you could invite your friends and family to experience a “Taste of Judaism” at our Temple without undue pressure? Now there’s an answer! A Taste of Judaism: Are You Curious? will be held in our congregation this winter. The class is being taught by Rabbi Michelson and is sponsored by the Union for Reform Judaism Commission on Outreach and Synagogue Community. This class is FREE, and is a three-session Outreach program, that is open to the unaffiliated only – Jews or non-Jews – all are welcome (unfortunately, Temple members are not eligible to enroll). Please take advantage of this opportunity to reach out to your extended family members, future in-laws, neighbors and friends and offer them a “Taste” of what makes Judaism so special right here in our own community. If you have anyone that you think may benefit from Taste, please have them contact the Taste of Judaism Program Coordinator at 610-375-6034 for more information.

RCOS BOOK GROUP

Sunday, Feb. 25 at 4 p.m.

We are reading

*“The Sunflower: On the
Possibilities and Limits
of Forgiveness”*

by Simon Wiesenthal

Books may be available for purchase in
the Temple office

Chavurah

Saturday, Jan. 13 at 4 p.m.

Join Rabbi Michelson for an informal To-
rah study, something to eat, and Havdalah.
There will be a special program for children
while adults are studying.

The World of Jewish Music: Constancy and Creativity in Changing Cultures

Thursday, Jan. 11, 7:30 p.m.
at the Temple

Featuring Dr. Marsha Bryan Edelman, professor
of music and education at Gratz College.

January Simchas

Anniversaries

| | |
|--|---------|
| Mr. and Mrs. Gene Friedman | Jan. 1 |
| Mr. and Mrs. Norbert Salpeter | Jan. 16 |
| Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gilbert | Jan. 25 |
| Mr. and Mrs. M. Robert Ullman | Jan. 28 |
| Bonnie Friedman & Cantor Gerald Miller | Jan. 29 |

Birthdays

| | |
|--------------------|---------|
| Dr. Stuart S. Cohn | Jan. 1 |
| Timothy Schuchart | Jan. 1 |
| Dr. C. Harold Cohn | Jan. 5 |
| Maxine Henry | Jan. 6 |
| Adrienne Cardinal | Jan. 7 |
| Bonnie Friedman | Jan. 7 |
| Paul Cohn | Jan. 9 |
| Robin Drezner | Jan. 10 |
| Elizabeth Fishman | Jan. 13 |
| Cynthia Schuchart | Jan. 14 |
| Michael Zamrin | Jan. 15 |

| | |
|--------------------|---------|
| David Bender | Jan. 17 |
| Holly Michelson | Jan. 17 |
| Marcella Goldberg | Jan. 18 |
| Barbara Silverberg | Jan. 18 |
| Scott A. Egolf | Jan. 19 |
| Pat Shore | Jan. 19 |
| Barbara Stein | Jan. 20 |
| Judith Kaneff | Jan. 21 |
| Jeffrey Cardinal | Jan. 24 |
| Lillian Cohn | Jan. 25 |
| June Winston | Jan. 25 |
| Lee Berger | Jan. 27 |
| Fredrick J. Singer | Jan. 27 |
| Robb Mutzel | Jan. 31 |

MAZEL TOV

to Al Diamond on his 85th birthday, which he
celebrated in December

REFORM CONGREGATION OHEB SHOLOM

Affiliated with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations since 1907

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Alan G. Weitzman, Rabbi Emeritus

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