



# SINAIDIALOGUE



## The Blessing of Snow



Rabbi  
Alexander  
Lazarus-Klein

I am delighted to announce that Ashirah, Jarah, Boaz and I will be in Buffalo at least until 2014. We are very thankful toward the Temple Sinai Board for approving a new three-year contract and allowing us to continue the good work we have already done together. This is a fantastic place to live and work and I look forward to continuing to learn and grow together for many more years to come.

This is our third winter here in Buffalo, and I think my family and I have gotten used to the wonderful white snow that blankets the earth throughout most of the season. By the time January rolls around, it is hard to remember the green grass that is just below the surface. With freezing temperatures and constant snow watches, spring seems impossibly far away.

And, yet, that is exactly what we begin to think about on the Jewish calendar. On January 19<sup>th</sup>, we celebrate Tu B'Shevat, or the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month of Av, the new year of the trees. In Israel, the almond trees are first beginning to push through the earth. With their beautiful pink flowers, they are harbingers of warmer weather. As one of the more popular Tu B'Shevat songs says: *Hashekeidiah porachat, vashemesh paz zorachat, tziporim merosh kol gag mevarshot et bo hachag* ("The almond tree is blooming and the golden sun is shining, birds atop each roof, bless the arrival of the holiday").

Coinciding with Tu B'Shevat this year is Shabbat Shirah, the Shabbat that we read about the crossing of the sea. Shir means song or poem, and Shabbat Shirah is a time when we read Moses' poem, "Shirat Hayam," and sing joyously together as a community.

Both Tu B'Shevat and Shabbat Shirah celebrate rebirth and new beginnings. Even as winter hangs over us, we know that the world is cyclical and that good times are surely ahead. These two holidays provide us strength to continue on our journeys, and the knowledge that the world is always alive with possibility.

This year, our people are especially in need of the sense of hope the Tu B'Shevat and Shabbat Shira provide. As I write this newsletter article, Israel is in the midst of one of the worst heatwaves on modern record. Fires burn across Northern Israel, and the two staples of Israeli diets, tomatoes and cucumbers, have quadrupled in price. This is supposed to be the rainy season, and yet, as of the beginning of December, it has yet to rain.

Pictures of firefighter planes circling the Carmel are in sharp contrast with the images we usually see of Israel, and a reminder that the Holy Land is not immune to the effects of global warming. Every winter, we add the line *mashiv haruah, u'morid hagashem* ("May the wind blow and the rain fall") to our prayers. This year, this line takes on particular importance from our knowledge that wind and rain can bring an end the threat of further fires.

Hopefully, by the time you are reading this newsletter, the residents of Haifa and its neighboring towns will have returned to their homes and order will have been restored to the region. It is these kinds of events that make us appreciate both the small and large blessings of life, the sprouting of the almond tree and the crossing of the sea. Let us sing out to God like Moses, *as yashir moshe*, rejoicing together, knowing that — at least in Buffalo — looking your window and seeing snow is a sign of good things to come.

B'Shalom,

Rabbi Alex

## From The President



Jill Hamilton

If you were asked to define a “good rabbi,” what qualities would you list? Jewish knowledge? People skills? Inspiring services? A warm and caring manner? One website I looked at said that the most important quality in a rabbi is storytelling ability. I suppose the writer had a point, as most of Jewish learning boils down to good storytelling. Temple Sinai is very lucky to have found many of the best rabbinic qualities in Rabbi Alex Lazarus-Klein. And I am very pleased to announce that the Board of Directors recently voted unanimously to renew Rabbi Alex’s contract, which expires in June 2011, for another three years. Since coming to Temple Sinai, Rabbi Alex has worked well with many diverse aspects of the Temple Sinai community, and has been active in the wider WNY Jewish community as well. He teaches at Kadimah School and the High School of Jewish Studies, and sits on the board of Jewish Family Services. He and his wife, Ashirah, have started a successful toddler program, which has spread to include all of the temples in Western NY. We enjoy seeing Rabbi Alex’s beautiful family around temple, and are so glad that they are going to stay with us. We look forward to Rabbi Alex’s continued leadership, working alongside the Board, to guide Temple Sinai toward our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary and into our future.

There is one other very important piece of news I need to report. As I mentioned in last month’s *Dialogue*, we are forming a small committee to review our dues structure and make recommendations to the board. I have listened to many concerns about dues since coming to office this past July. Many people are struggling to pay their dues, while others feel they carry an unfair proportion of the burden. Meanwhile, the board is working hard to establish a fiscally responsible budget for Temple Sinai. I have come to the conclusion that, instead of continually adjusting people’s dues, we may need to come up with an entirely new system. We want to create a dues structure that is as fair as possible to everyone, while meeting Temple Sinai’s financial needs. This is a tremendous undertaking.

As part of the possible restructuring, you may be asked to answer some questions over the next couple of months. We want to know what our members feel would be a fair system. We also need to figure out a (confidential) way to estimate the income base of the temple as a whole, so that we know how much we can reasonably expect to budget for. If we do figure out a way to collect this information quickly and confidentially, please be assured that it will be used only in an anonymous, aggregate manner, to help us establish a fair system. The information will be discarded after the study is complete, and will not be used to set your dues level under the new system. We do not yet know what form this collection of information might take. If you are contacted in connection with the dues restructuring process, please cooperate. We need good information in order to establish a fair system.

So, Temple Sinai is looking at a promising future, with a wonderful rabbi, and a balanced-as-possible, fair-as-possible budget. It may be cold and wintry outside right now, but I’d say our future’s so bright, we have to wear shades.



## **Future Event: Jazz on Mount Sinai**

The membership committee is hard at work planning an annual fundraising event, "Jazz on Mount Sinai," featuring George Scott and his Big Band. There will be wine and dessert and much more. If you own a business and would like to donate an item or gift certificate; can perform a service; or have giftware, artwork or other items you would like to donate, please contact Michael Rosenberg at [drrosenberg@roadrunner.com](mailto:drrosenberg@roadrunner.com). Themed baskets tend to work very well too, so if you and a friend would like to put something together, let us know and we can make arrangements to pick the items up.

***SAVE THE DATE!***  
**Saturday, April 30, 2011**  
**Temple Sinai Presents**  
**"JAZZ ON MOUNT SINAI"**  
**with George Scott and His Big Band**  
**8:00 pm in the Social Hall**  
**Music, Dancing, Desserts, & Wine**  
**Special Prizes & Auction**

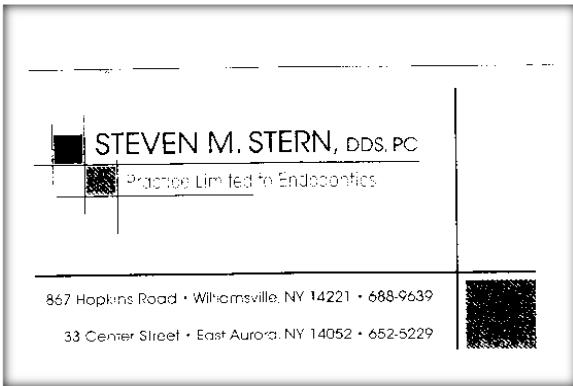


## **Temple Sinai Archive Project**

**by Rebecca Slonim**

For those who don't know, I am working on an archive project for Temple Sinai's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Temple has many photos in storage, and some are archived at UB. I am organizing, identifying and scanning the photos. I am making great progress; however, I could use help in identifying many of the people in the photographs. The recorded documents will be posted on Temple Sinai's website and in the temple library. Stop by to see if you can help identify some of the past Sinai members. If anyone has any photos or other documents that relate to Temple Sinai, please contact Rabbi Alex or the temple office. Thank you.





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## Chai Club Fundraiser Continues Week # 7

Perhaps these Chai Club winners used their funds for a traditional Chinese dinner.

\$18 to Leslie Gold,  
\$36 to Susan Schlicht and  
\$54 to Elyse Gilman

There are 11 more weeks of Chai Club winners and lots of names to be drawn.  
You have no chance of winning unless you buy a ticket! Send your check in today.

Congratulations to all of our winners:

**Week 1:** Bennet Myers, Dr. Derkatz,  
Geist Family

**Week 2:** Carol Welc, Alva & Nate Finkelstein,  
Nickolas Kurek

**Week 3:** Amy O'Donnell, Carol Kwiatkowski,  
Sy Suchman

**Week 4:** Ilana & Renee Shapiro, Tamara Kurek,  
Becky Batcho & Pat Bruno

**Week 5:** Ron Bihovsky, Sandy Seide,  
Alva Finkelstein

**Week 6:** Norma Unher, Bev Gilden,  
Karin Lowenthal

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## **Library Corner**

by Leslie Jasczak

If you have made a New Year's resolution to expand your Jewish knowledge, please take a look in the 200 section of the temple library. There, we have several excellent introductory books on Judaism, including Morris Kertzer's *What is a Jew?* and Anita Diamant's *Living a Jewish Life*.

For a basic practical introduction, however, *The How To Handbook for Jewish Living* by Rabbis Kerry M. Olitzky and Ronald H. Isaacs cannot be beat. As the authors say in their preface, they have provided "a step-by-step guide to doing things that make us unique as Jewish people." In short, clearly written chapters with illustrations, they explain every basic Jewish ritual and practice from how to make aliyah to the Torah to how to make matzah. Sources are included at the end of each chapter for those who wish to delve more deeply into the subject. At the end of the book is a section containing "Instant Information" on such things as the Jewish calendar, basic Modern Hebrew vocabulary, and greetings for Shabbat and holidays.

Whether you are new to Jewish practice, have forgotten much of what you learned in Hebrew school, or just want to brush up on something you do not do often, *The How To Handbook for Jewish Living* is an invaluable source of information and would be an excellent addition to any home library.

## **ANDREW W. GREEN, M.D.**

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*(Owner: Marjorie Newman)*

This certificate entitles the bearer to one complete dog grooming for a small dog. Grooming includes: bath, nail clipping, teeth scaling, flea treatment, ear cleaning, and expert styling. Please call ahead for appointment and mention this certificate.

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A check to Temple Sinai for value of service must be written at appointment time. Value is \$40-\$45.

Attention students...

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## **GENERAL FUND**

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THE BIRTH OF RIMMA SHAPOSHNIKOV'S  
BABY DAUGHTER ALEXANDRA by Marianne  
& Norman Goldstein

THE MARRIAGE OF BENJAMIN FREER by  
Charlotte & Marty Wolpin

### **In Memory of**

WILLIAM SNITZER by Cis & Iz Snitzer  
WILLIAM GREENE by Barbara Markel  
GEORGE ROSENFELD by Andrew &  
Elaine Green  
IKE GEIST by Esther Bates  
MAX SCHULEFAND by Barbara Schulefand  
MARK SUCHMAN by Lawrence Katz

## **MEMORIAL FUNDS**

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## **YAHRZEIT FUND**

### **In Memory of**

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DORA SHAPOSNIKOV by Lilian &  
Yakov Shaposhnikov  
SAMUEL LESSNER, ANNA LESSNER,  
AARON CHEIFFETZ & TILLIE CHEIFFETZ by  
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## **EDUCATION FUNDS**

**LEONARD & BETTY GOODMAN  
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**LOUIS D. REKOON MEMORIAL FUND**

## **RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND**

### **In Honor of**

RABBI ALEX by Harriet Rosenfeld

### **In Memory of**

THOMAS WALDERS by Stacey Brooks  
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ARNOLD LOWENTHAL by Karin  
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ANN GILDEN by A. Donald Gilden

MORITZ KESSLER by Mirel & Melania Puius

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**MORRIS SOBEL FUND**  
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### **In Honor of**

THE BIRTH OF AYLA FRAWLEY  
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## **BESS AND MORRIS MICHAELS MEMORIAL COURTYARD GARDEN FUND**

### **In Memory of**

ROBERT KARDAMAN by Paul Michaels

## **MUSIC FUND**

## **PRAAYERBOOK FUND**

## **JUBILEE ENDOWMENT FUND**

## **TREE OF LIFE**

## **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

David Lewitsky

## **MAZEL TOV**

## **CONDOLENCES**

Harriet Rosenfeld on the loss of her  
husband, George Rosenfeld  
Esther Greene on the loss of her husband,  
William Greene  
Richard Cramer-Benjamin on the loss of his  
father, Robert Benjamin

## Upcoming Events

**New Year's Eve Shabbat Service** at Temple Beth Am at 6 pm

**Purim Spiel Rehearsal Sundays** starting January 2 at 1 pm at Temple Sinai

**Board of Trustees Meeting** Tuesday, January 3, 7:30 pm

**Friday January 7** Potluck dinner at 5:30 pm, Tot Shabbat at 6 pm, Family Shabbat Service at 7 pm

**Erev Tu B'Shvat** Wednesday, January 19

**Learner's Minyan** Friday, January 21 at 6:30 pm, prior to Shabbat evening service

**Gesher Havdallah Service** Saturday, February 5 at Temple Sinai

**Jazz on Mount Sinai** Saturday April 30 at 8 pm *Save this date for a fun-filled evening!*

## Weekly Schedule of Services

**Shabbat service** Fridays, 7:30 pm (Family Services on first Friday of month at 7 pm; Tots at 6:00 pm)

**Shacharit service** Saturdays, 10:00 am (unless noted above)

**Beit Midrash Torah study** Saturdays, 11:00 am (at 9:30 am on day of Bar/Bat Mitzvot)

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