



Vassar Temple Bulletin

Congregation Brethren of Israel אהלים ישראל Founded 1848 Volume 158 No. 12 December 2012

Shabbat Services at 6:00 p.m. from November 23rd through February



During the winter, our Friday evening Shabbat services begin at 6:00 p.m. An hour later, you can enjoy crackers, cheese and

nuts, as well as sweets, at an Oneg in the East Chapel.

Early services will begin this year on the Friday right after Thanksgiving and will continue for the months of Decem-

ber, January and February (except for the special Hanukkah candle-lighting service on December 14th). This schedule enables you to come to Kabbalat Shabbat services straight from work on winter evenings and arrive home in time for Shabbat dinner. Many congregants meet old or new friends at the services and then go out for supper.

Give the shortened winter Shabbat services a try; you'll find that this change of pace has advantages on cold evenings.

Find Everything You Need at our Judaica Shoppe Hanukkah Sale



This year we light the first Hanukkah candle soon – on the evening of Saturday, December 8th. Everything* you and your family need to celebrate

the Festival of Lights will be on sale on Sundays, December 2nd and 9th from 9:30 a.m. to noon in the East Chapel, as well as Monday through Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.– or just give us a call and we will meet you at your convenience.

Special this year: a bucket full of specially priced Hanukkah crafts! Come early for best selection! A grand array of items is on display or in stock – or you may place a special order. For further information contact Perla Kaufman at 914-456-7309 or brandaliz5@optonline.net.

*Hanukkah gelt - milk and dark chocolate- dreidls, menorot, candles, wrapping paper, as well as new jewelry by GeoArt Cynthia Gale, Alef Bet by Paula, perfect gifts, and ritual items.

Hanukkah Dinner and Service on December 14th

Vassar Temple's annual pot-luck Hanukkah dinner will be held on Friday, December 14th at 6:00 p.m. in the social hall. Bring a dairy dish (anything except meat or poultry) for 12; Sisterhood will provide latkes, applesauce, challah, salad and beverages.

The cost for the dinner is \$18 per family or \$6 per individual. Prepaid reservations for this popular event must be made by Tuesday, December 10th by contacting Roni Stein at 223-5804 or roniagt99@aol.com. Send your check

to Vassar Temple Sisterhood, 140 Hooker Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601, with "Hanukkah Dinner" on the memo line.



The dinner will be followed at 7:30 by our traditional, exciting and beautiful family-friendly Hanukkah Menorah-Lighting Shabbat service, to which everyone is welcome and encouraged to bring a menorah and eight candles. If you have not yet experienced this service, and even if you have, you are in for a real treat!

Upcoming Events

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Bright Lights and Miracles Gala

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Hanukkah Party on December 2nd



The Jewish Federation of Dutchess County is sponsoring a community-wide Hanukkah Party on Sunday, December 2nd at the Mid-Hudson Children's Museum, 75 North Water Street, Poughkeepsie, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. The cost for each adult will be \$5; there is no charge for children 12 and under. This includes admission to the museum with all its interactive exhibits, a kosher hot dog dinner, crafts, and party favors. The evening will feature musical entertainment by children from the Half Moon

Party continued on page 3

Rabbi's Message: NEVERTHELESS, A JEW



I frequently have to explain to congregants some principles that govern participation in a synagogue worship service. Certain activities, including being called to the Torah for an *'aliyah*, raising the Torah scroll after its reading, and reciting in the sanctuary the blessing over Shabbat candles, are limited to Jews. To be more exact about it, they are self-referential statements – explicit and public declarations of being a Jew. Non-Jews do not do these otherwise ritual actions, unless they wish no longer to be non-Jews!

This is one of those “rubber hits the road” moments. Jews in America today – and for the past century or more – can be mostly hidden. Our dress, language, residence, and place of work are indistinguishable from those of our neighbors. Usually, with a discreet change of name, Jews can erase all distinctive indicia of religion and heritage. Being Jewish, therefore, entails, in twenty-first century

America, some affirmative action.

The current condition for American Jews is hardly new. Indeed, a good case in point took place nearly 2200 years ago...and is replicated every December. Around 175 B.C.E., the region of Judea in the Seleucid Empire had become increasingly Greek (Hellenistic) in its culture. Ten years later, a faction of Judeans sufficiently felt that their Jewish identity was being so suppressed that they were willing to mount a revolt against a much larger, well armed, and disciplined army. Somehow, they won. We have been observing Hanukkah ever since.

The celebration is not of the victory, but rather of the affirmation, in the face of great social and cultural pressure, of being Jews. And to this day, Hanukkah continues to serve this purpose. At a holiday season, when all of America is invited to be religiously or secularly Christian, Jews are implicitly pressed to choose: do I assert my Jewish identity or not? The ritual of Hanukkah is extraordinarily simple: just light some candles each evening for eight nights. Yet, it is also extraordinarily

powerful – a declaration of being Jewish in an indifferent and occasionally hostile world.

May this Hanukkah be bright, joyous, and filled with hope and peace!

* * *

It takes confidence and a sure sense of oneself to assert one's Jewish identity in a non-Jewish world. It helps enormously when that confidence and self-awareness is promoted during childhood. Few places are more effective at reinforcing a Jewish identity than the URJ Northeast Camps in either Great Barrington or West Stockbridge, MA. Parents of students in the 3rd to 6th grades, please give serious consideration to sending your children this summer. Financial aid is available. Want more information? Don't hesitate to ask me.

Rabbi Paul Golomb



President's Message

It's hard to believe that Hanukkah and the winter season are upon us. It feels as if the High Holy Days have barely passed, and here we are; trees are without leaves and it's dark at 4:30 p.m.! But the lights burn brightly at Vassar Temple, and the building is buzzing with activity. Religious School is in full swing on Sunday and Wednesday, with the Wednesday evening Geshet program starting to wrap up its first semester before joining with Temple Beth-El for the semester starting in January. We have just held *Bright Nights and Miracles*, our Hanukkah-themed Gala, at Locust Grove, honoring Lou Lewis and the Menkens.

A number of our members have been enjoying our adult education program with topics such as “Tinderbox Triangle: Jordan, Lebanon, Syria” and “What's

Next: Jewish Visions of Afterlife.” Professor Sid Plotkin's discussion of the recent elections has been rescheduled for Thursday evening, December 6th at 7:00 p.m. On Saturday morning, December 8th, you will have the opportunity to discuss your views of God with other congregants. Stay tuned for our winter and spring education offerings.

Don't forget to attend the annual Hanukkah Candle Lighting Shabbat Service on December 14th. You won't want to miss the excitement when everyone lights their menorahs in the dimmed sanctuary! These are just some of the many activities and programs our Rabbi and dedicated members worked so hard to produce, and there are more to come.

If you happen to be outside the rear of the Temple building, check out the new walkway built and installed by the Men's Club. Many thanks to Chuck Stein, who took on the project and built several

sections of walkway with the help of Jeff Brenner and Ron Rosen; to Bob Ritter and Alan Kafrowitz for shuttling the sidewalk sections in their trucks and coordinating the installation; and to the rest of the work crew, including Kurt Quackenbush, Jerry Slate, and Dave Wolf. A special thank you goes to H.G. Page Lumber, who provided the wood and building materials at a nice discount!

Sandra Mamis deserves our thanks for coordinating an excellent Shabbat Noach, with a number of therapy animals present during the Oneg for everyone to pet and greet. Special thanks to Sandra (and her cat Peanut) for delivering the D'var Torah when our speaker, Neil Abramson, could not make it due to a death in his family.

I'd like to also thank Howard Himelstein, whose small building repairs have helped keep the Temple building working smoothly.

I hope you enjoy your Hanukkah with its delicious latkes and have fun playing Dreidle and otherwise interacting with your family. Marianne and I extend our best wishes to all of you for a Happy Hanukkah and a healthy, happy, and prosperous new year.

L'Shalom!

Bob Abrams

Vassar Temple Blog

Be sure to check out the Vassar Temple blog regularly at

<http://vassartemple.wordpress.com/>.

Keep up with the latest reflections and join the conversation!

Worship Services

Saturday, December 1

9:00 a.m. Torah Study
10:00 a.m. New Paths Service

Friday, December 7

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service with Birthday Blessings

Saturday, December 8

9:00 a.m. Torah Study
10:00 a.m. Shabbat Morning Service

Friday, December 14

7:30 p.m. Hanukkah Candle Light Service with Rabbi Golomb and cantorial soloist, Elisa Dugatkin

Saturday, December 15

9:00 a.m. Torah Study
10:00 a.m. New Paths

Friday, December 21

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service with Rabbi Golomb and cantorial soloist, Elisa Dugatkin

Saturday, December 22

9:00 a.m. Torah Study

Friday, December 28

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service

Saturday, December 29

9:00 a.m. Torah Study

Friday, January 4

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service

Saturday, January 5

9:00 a.m. Torah Study
10:00 a.m. New Paths Service

New Paths Service on December 1st and 15th

A New Paths service will be held Saturdays, December 1st and 15th, at 10:00 a.m. in the intimacy of the East Chapel. Please join us!

Most of this shabbat morning service is in English and everything is open to thoughtful contemplation and discussion. The focus is on letting the service get through you, rather than on getting through the service. Each New Paths service, whether lay led or rabbi led, provides a unique, thoughtful and spiritual Shabbat morning experience. A brief informal kiddush follows.

For more information about New Paths services, please contact Marian Schwartz at mschwa9882@aol.com or 845-849-0025, or Rabbi Golomb at rabbi@vassartemple.org or 845-454-2570.

Scriptural Readings

December 1 *Vayishlach*

Genesis 35:16-36:43
Haftarah: Ovadiah 1:1-21

December 7 & 8 *Vayeshev*

Genesis 39:1-40:23
Haftarah: Amos 2:6-3:8

December 14 & 15 *Mikketz Shabbat Hanukkah*

Genesis 43:16-44:17
Haftarah: Zechariah 2:14-4:7

December 21 & 22 *VaYigash*

Genesis 46:28-47:27
Haftarah: Ezekiel 37:15-25

December 28 & 29 *Vay'hi*

Genesis 49:27-50:26
Haftarah: I Kings 2:1-12

January 4 & 5 *Shmot*

Exodus 4:18-6:1
Haftarah: Isaiah 27:6-28:13, 29:22-23

“What About God?” after Shabbat Services on Saturday Morning, December 8th

After our Shabbat morning Torah service on Saturday, December 8th, you will have the opportunity to discuss with your fellow congregants such topics as

- how often you think about God;
- when (if ever) you feel close to God, and when you feel especially distant;
- how you would describe God; and
- what question you would like God to answer.

These questions are based on an article by Rabbi Mark Dov Shapiro of Springfield, MA in the summer 2012 issue of Reform Judaism magazine about “The God Survey” he took among his congregants. For a preview, go to <http://reformjudaismmag.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=3036>.

Whether you are attracted by a moving Torah service, a thought-provoking interactive discussion, or a chance to socialize over kiddush, you are sure to get into the spirit of Shabbat at temple that Saturday. The dress code is casual and you are welcome during all or any part of the morning.

We will begin at 9:00 a.m. with our usual lively study of the Haftarah of the week with Rabbi Golomb. A family-friendly Torah service will begin at 10:00 in the East Chapel, providing the perfect opportunity for parents to attend with their children and for adults who prefer daytime services to hear the Torah read. At 11:15 we will begin our theological and spiritual sharing, and at noon we will enjoy a kiddush together. Plan to join us!

Party *continued from page 1*

Theatre School of the Arts and by Zev Haber and Pretzelstein.

Your whole family is sure to get into the mood for Hanukkah at this joyful event, where door prizes include an iPad for one lucky person. Space is limited, so make your reservation now by emailing hanukkah-party@aol.com or calling 845-471-9811. Thanks to the Rocking Horse Ranch for its sponsorship!



Tiny Temple Learns about Tzedakah on December 16th

The next session of Tiny Temple will be held on Sunday, December 16th from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. All preschoolers (age infant-5) and their parents, regardless of synagogue affiliation, are invited to have fun while learning about Tzedakah (charity) through story, song and activities, and enjoying a healthful snack in a relaxed and friendly setting. Tiny Temple, which is sponsored by the Sisterhood every month during the school year, gives parents an opportunity to meet others raising young Jewish children and is always free of charge. To assist in our planning, please RSVP to tinytemple@vassartemple.org.





Mazel Tov

... to David & Joan Posner in honor of the birth of their first grandchild, Kai Nathaniel Posner on Friday, October 12. Proud parents are Michael Posner and Katie Legomsky.

In Remembrance

Vassar Temple shares in the grief suffered by the family of:

Ruth Muraskin, mother of
Barbara Gillman

Refuah Shelemah

To our Temple members, **Adriaan Finnerman, Sandy Metlis and Arthur Stern** who were recently hospitalized.

Sisterhood Opening Dinner

On October 23rd Sisterhood kicked off the year with a lovely dinner in our social hall and an engaging program about our many social action projects.



We Need Your Help!

It's awful to be the last to know that someone has been hospitalized, needs a visit or needs some other kind of help.



We are, once again, asking that you be the eyes and ears in the lives of our congregational family. Federal patient privacy regulations limit the information that hospitals make available to clergy and volunteers.

We are encouraging you to contact the Temple office when a congregant is admitted to a hospital and wishes to have Rabbi visit during the hospital stay. Our goal is to meet the needs of all our congregants and we can only do this with your help.

URJ Storm Relief Fund

In response to the devastating impact of Hurricane Sandy, the Union for Reform Judaism has activated its Hurricane Relief fund to collect donations for those suffering in the storm's wake. Individuals wishing to donate or learn more about the URJ's relief work should visit <http://urj.org/socialaction/issues/relief/hurricanes/>.

Donations can be made online through this link, or by mail to:
Hurricane Relief Fund
Union for Reform Judaism
633 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10017.

Wheelchairs Needed

The Medical Lending Closet maintained by Jewish Family Services at the JCC is urgently in need of good quality, functional wheelchairs with footrests. If you have a wheelchair to donate, please contact jfs@jewishdutchess.org, or phone Patty Weathers at 845-471-9811. JFS will be happy to provide you with a receipt for your donation.

Pulpit Flowers



- December 7 In loving memory of Seth A. Erlebacher from Melissa, Rachel & Brianna Erlebacher.
In memory of Ruth Bagun and Beatrice Snyder from Nan & Jeff Genshaft.
- December 14 Vassar Temple Sisterhood
- December 21 Vassar Temple Sisterhood
- December 28 Vassar Temple Sisterhood

Anyone who wishes to honor the memory of a loved one or to commemorate a special occasion can do so by sponsoring the Sanctuary flowers with a donation to the Shrub Fund. Just call Sandi Rugar at 454-2570. The donation to the Shrub Fund is \$55.

Vassar Temple Bulletin , published monthly	
Publisher:	Marianne Abrams
Editor:	Doi Cohen
Technical Support:	Bob Abrams

Articles for the January bulletin must be submitted to the temple office by December 3. Sorry, we cannot take Bulletin articles over the phone! Articles may be sent to Sandi Rugar via e-mail, at office@vassartemple.org or faxed to (845)452-5161.

The editor reserves the right to edit articles for style, accuracy and length.

December 2012 - Winter is Here Again...

IMAGINE ~ ~ A starving child, teenager or adult in our community...

IMAGINE ~ ~ A good can of soup, a warm meal that we can provide for someone during this cold season.

HUNGER MATTERS!
ANNOUNCING...
VASSAR TEMPLE'S ANNUAL
SOUPER SALE!!
December 1 – 21, 2012

Once again Vassar Temple invites you to make a donation, which will be used to purchase large cans of chunky soups. A caravan of congregants will deliver the soup to area food distribution sites like

Dutchess Outreach, Beulah Baptist Pantry and Interfaith Senior Housing. **100% of your donation will be used to purchase chunky soups for our community.**

How to donate? Please write a check to Vassar Temple, and in the subject line, write Souper Sale. Send the check to Vassar Temple, 140 Hooker Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601. That's it. You will know you are helping feed someone in this county who might otherwise truly miss a meal.

An added plus – All the money collected for the Souper Sale will be exchanged for SCRIP, which benefits the Temple too. The SCRIP will be used to

buy the chunky soups at a local grocery store. It's a win/win deal!



From chicken soup to chowder to chili... at Vassar Temple, we believe no one should go hungry. **Please be part of our annual Souper Sale!**

Questions? Contact Nancy Samson at [462-4828](tel:462-4828) or CANJAM123@aol.com or Marian Schwartz at socialaction@vassar temple.org or 845-849-0025.

Your Help and Food Donations Needed for December 2nd Lunch Box

The December 2nd Lunch Box at the Family Partnership Center will be sponsored by the members of our Youth Group and their families, who will make and serve a delicious chili meal. You can be part of this *mitzvah* by bringing 3 lbs. of ground beef or ground turkey browned with ½ cup of onions, or a dozen pieces of fruit (bananas, oranges, and green grapes are especially popular) to the temple before 11:00 a.m. that Sunday. If you leave the food in the temple refrigerator, be sure it is clearly marked with your name and "Lunch Box 12/2." Volunteers are also welcome at the Family Partnership Center on December 2nd between 11:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

If you can donate food or your time, please let Youth Group president Rachel Marcus know right away at 226-2502 or masinc223@aol.com.

Turkey Trot Project

Vassar Temple is collecting turkeys for distribution to the homeless from now through the middle of December. If you get a free turkey as a bonus from a supermarket, or if you buy an extra one, please put it into the temple freezer. Or you can write a check marked for the "Turkey Trot" which Sandra Mamis will use to buy turkeys using SCRIP.



Hurricane Sandy Relief Fund Update

Thanks to your generosity, as this is being written one week after it was established, the URJ's Hurricane Sandy Relief Fund has raised over \$200,000 from 1,600 donors. The funds are already being allocated to general and Jewish relief agencies on the scene, bringing physical assistance as well as hope and comfort to the hurricane victims.

In addition to community-wide relief, funds are also being directed to individual congregants who are suffering short or long term loss of food, shelter and clothing, and to Reform congregations whose temples were damaged during the storm, to help them resume operations as quickly as possible. As time goes on we are continually reassessing where and what kind of help is needed the most, getting input from the affected communities and congregations, and working with agencies on the scene so as not to duplicate services.

Looking to the future, now donations may also be earmarked toward scholarships for youths impacted by Hurricane Sandy, to enable them to attend Jewish summer camps despite the losses suffered by their families. To donate, go to <http://urj.org/socialaction/issues/relief/hurricanes/>

Cook Up a Mitzvah

On a cold winter's eve, there's nothing better than a savory bowl of chili, a spicy lasagne, a steaming casserole, a hearty stew, or some bone-warming soup. If any of these are your culinary specialties, we invite you to help with one of the "Jewish nights" at the homeless shelter this winter.

On the fourth Thursday of each month, members of the Jewish community provide the evening meal, served

around 8:00 p.m., at Hillcrest overnight shelter, which is located near Dutchess Community College. Only a few volunteers are needed to serve the dinner, and they can transport food made by others to the shelter. Donation of foods to round out the menu, including fresh fruit and containers of 100% juice, are always welcome, as well as sandwiches on nights when we're serving soup. The more people who volunteer, the more we can divide up

the amount of food needed to feed the up to 60 nightly guests at the shelter.

For more information, or to sign up to help with this mitzvah in the coming months, please contact Linda Doherty at lindadoherty@myway.com or (cell) 914-474-0038.

Religious School Director's Column



December 5th may be the most arcane date of importance in the Jewish calendar. It's when we start saying the winter prayer for rain.

Right off the bat, a question presents itself: Why do we use a secular date to delineate this Jewish custom, when all of the others are based on the Jewish calendar? And secondly, what's the magic behind December 5th? The answers take us on a fascinating journey through Jewish text, nature, astronomy, history, infrastructure, and politics.

There are in fact two times we add a mention of rain to our service. The first, more familiar now, is the short insertion in the Amida prayer about God's power: "mashiv ha-ru'ach umorid ha-gashem." God makes the wind blow and the rain fall. The second is an addition to the prayer petitioning God for bountiful produce: "ten tal umatar livracha." Grant us the blessing of dew and rain. The 1800-year-old Mishnah --- the initial compilation of Jewish law and practice --- discusses both of these in the chapter called Ta'anit ("fasting"), starting with the first one.

There was general agreement that the insertion should commence during the rainy season, roughly Sukkot. The Mishnah records a disagreement about the details. Rabbi Eliezer considered the first day of Sukkot a good time to start praying for rain, but Rabbi Yehoshua countered that no one wants rain on Sukkot, so it would be better to wait until the end of the holiday. But Sukkot is a pilgrimage holiday, when it was common to ascend

to Jerusalem by foot. If we start praying for rain right after Sukkot, it might rain on those who are walking home. So regarding the second insertion, Rabbi Gamaliel says that we should wait until 15 days after Sukkot to start praying for rain, that half-month being a reasonable amount of time to walk back to the farthest extent of the Land of Israel.

The Talmud --- the great codification of Jewish law and practice that contains the Mishnah and meandering commentary on it --- expands on the Mishnah and explains that in Babylonia, they didn't start saying the prayer for rain until 60 days into the rainy season of fall. Jewish geography is exceedingly simple. There are essentially only three places: Jerusalem, the rest of Israel, and the rest of the world. Therefore, we in New York live in the same place ("the rest of the world") as the Babylonians, so we follow their custom. We start saying the prayer for rain 60 days after the equinox.

The equinox is either September 22nd or September 23rd. But the careful reader may notice that 60 days after September 22nd or 23rd is November 21st or 22nd, not December 5th. So we keep digging.

Shmuel, in the Talmud section known as Eruvin, calculates the four seasons as each lasting 91 days and 7.5 hours, and assigns September 23rd as the start of fall. Because his became the official Jewish secular calendar, the Jewish equinox is always September 23rd. But we still wonder why we don't start praying for rain on November 22nd.

Shmuel's year of four seasons lasted 364 days and 30 hours, or 365.25 days. The solar year, though, is actually 11

minutes and 14 seconds shorter. Because of this discrepancy, the Jewish equinox has slowly moved forward compared to the solar equinox, at the rate of approximately one day every 128 years. The Catholic Church by coincidence, also used Shmuel's calendar, but unlike in Judaism, most of the Christian holidays are based on the solar date. By 1582, the official and solar calendars were 10 days out of sync, one result of which was that the springtime holiday of Easter was marching forward into summer. So Pope Gregory fixed the calendar by doing two things. He dropped ten days in October (the day after October 4th was October 15th that year), and, moving forward, he dropped three leap years every 400 years: years that are divisible by 100 would no longer be leap years unless they were also divisible by 400. (That's why 2000 was a leap year even though 1900 wasn't, and 2100 won't be.) In America and elsewhere in the world, we use the Gregorian calendar.

The Jews, though, didn't give a damn about Pope Gregory. So in 1582, the Jewish equinox moved ahead 10 days to October 3rd, the Gregorian equivalent of the Shmuelian September 23rd. Since then, 1700, 1800, and 1900 have been Shmuelian leap years but not Gregorian leap years.

So now, the Shmuelian equinox is the Gregorian October 6th. Sixty days after October 6th is December 5th. And there you have it. But don't get too used to that date. In the year 2100 (a Shmuelian leap year) the day moves ahead to December 6th.

Dr. Joel Hoffman

Sixth Grade Lunch Box a Great Success

Vassar Temple's 6th Grade Sunday School class fed over 100 people lunch at the Lunch Box in downtown Poughkeepsie by on November 4th. The mothers, fathers and their sons and daughters in the class left the temple at 11:00 a.m. to head over to the Lunch Box. Vassar Temple families provided 27 lbs. of meat and similar amounts of fruits and other ingredients to prepare the meal.

The children helped with food preparation and setup, and by the end of the meal most of the food was gone. The children formed an assembly line and had a great time serving the food and talking with the people they were feeding. This was the first time some of the families

participated in the Temple's Lunch Box program, which was eye-opening for both parents and children. Because of our busy lives, it is often difficult to find enough volunteers for other charitable events, but for this, Vassar Temple families rearranged their schedules and donated generously of their time and food to make the event a success.

We can all be proud of our congregation's charitable work, but a special thanks to Linda Babas, Julie Goldfischer, Robin Peritz, Danah Moore, Lisa Rubenstein, Eric Gillman, Melissa Erlebacher, Jen Dahnert, Judy Rosenfeld, Ellen Zelig, Bill Beehler, Marian Schwartz, Linda Doherty and her children, and to the 6th grade class,

Sarah Frankel, Justin Moore, Amanda Moore, Zoe Peritz, Sabrina Goldfischer, and Molly Gillman, who participated directly in this worthy effort.

Carolynn Frankel
6th grade Parent Lunch Box Captain



Jewish Family Services Emergency Fund Seeks Hanukkah Support

In 2010 Jewish Family Services of Dutchess County established the Emergency Fund for Jewish Families to assist members of the local Jewish community by offering grants and honor loans for those who are facing a financial crisis. The emergency situation might be the need to make a utility payment to keep the lights on, buy food or a life-sustaining medicine, meet the month's rent or mortgage payment, or to pay for child-care while a parent goes to a job interview. For some local Jewish families facing these crises, the Emergency Fund for Jewish Families is the only place they have left to turn to for assistance. The fund is supported solely by private donations, most especially by local synagogue members.

Requests to the fund have recently

increased, and additional support is needed if JFS is to continue this vital service to the local community. As Hanukkah approaches and Jewish families wonder how to celebrate in a meaningful, non-commercial way, please consider a donation to the Emergency Fund for Jewish Families. Donations are always appropriate in honor of or in memory of a loved one.

You may donate easily and securely online by going to the Jewish Federation website, www.jewishdutchess.org, and clicking on the Jewish Family Services link. Or you may contribute by writing a check to Jewish Family Services of Dutchess County with the notation "Emergency Fund" on the memo line. Checks may be mailed to JFS, 110 South Grand Ave., Poughkeepsie, NY 12603.

Additionally, any contributions placed in the Vassar Temple tzedakah box this month will benefit the Emergency Fund for Jewish Families. The EFJF offers grants and honor loans in amounts up to \$800 to local Jewish families experiencing a financial emergency, and applications for assistance from the fund can be obtained by calling Dr. Linda Tafapolsky, Ph.D., director of Jewish Family Services of Dutchess County, at 845-471-9817, or by sending a confidential email to her at jfs@jewishdutchess.org.

Hanukkah Lights

Please start a family tradition to make the sixth night of Hanukkah truly the Light of Tzedakah (Ner Shel Tzedakah). When you light your Hanukkah candles on December 13th, choose one of the following options which seems to be a good fit for you and your family (or think up something super of your own)! Give a gift that you would have received yourself that night to someone else in need. Give gifts to charity, instead of to family members, for the sixth night. The donation can be given to an organization that reflects the interests and concerns of the family member. Other good choices are Heifer International (www.heifer.org) where you can give a share in an animal that will help a needy family become more self-reliant, and the Jewish National Fund—which is

Hillcrest Overnight Homeless Shelter

Needs Your Donations

The shelter's funding has been cut so it has appealed to us because there is a critical need for bath towels (either new or used in good condition) and toiletries of any size. Toiletries should be unopened (shampoo, tooth paste, toothbrushes, disposable razors, shaving cream, deodorant, soap, etc.) Please bring your donated items to the collection box in the East Chapel of the Temple (NOT the CanJam bin) or contact Judy Harkavy at judystan@verizon.net or 471-4973.

"more than just trees" (<http://www.jnf.org>).

Consider purchasing at least one Hanukkah gift item through our Sisterhood Judaica Shop. The proceeds from sales of the many Israeli products, crafts and jewelry in the display window and available at the Hanukkah sale will strengthen the Israeli economy. Make the shop your source for holiday items and gift-wrap. Any sale will benefit the good work of our Sisterhood and our Temple.

Like the original Hanukkah miracle, you can help keep the Ner Shel Tzedakah burning long beyond "rational expectation." Plan to drop a non-perishable food item into the Can Jam bin when you come to Temple. Perhaps your family can volunteer just a few hours to a Temple activity such as CAN JAM and Lunch

Box, or sign up to do a service project on Mitzvah Day. Donate to a charity to honor folks on birthdays, anniversaries and *simchas* throughout the year. Join others on a glorious fall day to do the CROP Walk. Make seasonal closet cleanouts a spring and fall routine and give any unwanted or outgrown clothing to the Sisterhood rummage sale. Donate to a fund that addresses hunger (such as Mazon, Dutchess Outreach, or the NACOEJ) on Jewish fast days, Passover, and harvest festivals by simply sending a check to Vassar Temple earmarked for Mazon or for the Temple's Community Tzedakah Fund. Start a new family tradition on the sixth night of Hanukkah, December 13th and choose your own special way to help keep the light of tzedakah burning brightly throughout the year.

Bereavement Guide Available through Our Website

The Vassar Temple Nachamu Committee has prepared a complete guide to Jewish mourning practices for our members. It is easy to find by going to our temple website, www.vassartemple.org, and clicking on the special link on the left side of the home page.

The 2012 Elections: What Happened and What Now?

Before November 6th, Barack Obama was in the White House, the Democrats had control of the Senate, and Republicans firm control of the House. After about six billion dollars was spent, Obama is in the White House, the Democrats have control of the Senate, and the Republicans firm control of the House. Did anything change? And if so, just what did?

On Thursday, December 6th at 7:00 p.m. Vassar College political science professor, and Vassar Temple member, Sidney Plotkin will lead a discussion on the consequences of the elections just past. Like his previous presentations at the temple, this one is sure to be enlightening and thought-provoking. The community is welcome to attend this special event, led by an outstanding teacher.

For more information, contact Susan Needelman at adulted@vassartemple.org or Rabbi Golomb at rabbi@vassartemple.org.

Hanukkah Candle Blessings

Baruch ata Adonai, Elohenu melech ha-olam asher kideshanu be-mitzvotav, ve-tzivanu le-hadlikner shel Hanukkah.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who sanctified us by Your commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the lights of Hanukkah.

Baruch ata Adonai, Elohenu melech ha-olam she-asa nisim la-avotenu ba-yamim ha-hem ba-zeman ha-zeh.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who wrought miracles for our fathers in days of old, at this season.

(For the first night only)

Baruch ata Adonai, Elohenu melech ha-olam she-hecheyanu, ve-kiyemanu, ve-higyanu la-zeman ha-zeh.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who has kept us alive, and has preserved us, and enabled us to reach this season.

Holiday Time is fast approaching

Gift Cards are the answer for
those hard-to-please loved ones and friends



Vassar Temple SCRIP Program provides the recipients
with the opportunity to buy exactly what they want!

Clothing retailers - Department stores -
Sports equipment retailers - Restaurants -
Home Improvement stores - Theaters - Hotels
and much, much more!

Don't forget to use SCRIP when purchasing
your holiday food items and
when doing all your shopping year round.
Cards are available to ADAMS, ShopRite, Stop & Shop,
Hannaford, and A&P

Book Club to Discuss “The Lost Wife” on December 19th

Vassar Temple Sisterhood’s Book Club will discuss “The Lost Wife” by Alyson Richman, a heart-wrenching novel about love and devotion during the Holocaust and through the decades afterwards, on Wednesday, December 19th at 2:00 p.m. in the Community Room of Collegeview Tower, 141 Fulton Ave., Poughkeepsie.

In pre-war Prague, the dreams of two young lovers are shattered when they are separated by the Nazi invasion. Then, 60 years later, thousands of miles away in New York, there’s a glance of recognition between two strangers at a wedding as the grandfather of the groom meets the grandmother of the bride and realizes their

shared past. The lives of each of the two main characters in the intervening years, when each thought the other had died, show how the Nazis destroyed minds as well as bodies, and illustrates the saving role art can play in one’s life. The book is available in paperback, electronic, audio CD, or large-print format, or by reservation through the local library system.

Linda Babas will lead the discussion and Sandy Chertock will provide refreshments. To RSVP or get more information, contact Doi Cohen at 462-6193 or dcohen1230@gmail.com.



First Adult Ed Course for This Year a Great Success

“Tinderbox Triangle: Jordan, Lebanon, Syria” was the name of this fall’s course on Israel’s Middle Eastern neighbors. Holding three sessions on this general subject has become a popular tradition at Vassar Temple over the last few years and always draws people from the general community as well.

This year attendance was higher than ever, culminating on October 18th when Martin Charwat explained the situation in Syria for an appreciative audience of nearly 80. The course began with an enlightening presentation on Jordan by Rabbi Golomb and continued with an outstanding description of the history and politics of Lebanon by Dr. Mouannes Hojairi of the Africana Studies Department at Vassar College. In each case, the

audience was fully engaged, asking astute questions after the presentation, and extra chairs had to be set up to accommodate the crowd.

The Thursday evening adult education courses continued this fall with three classes on Jewish views of Afterlife by Rabbi Golomb and a special analysis on the elections by Prof. Sidney Plotkin of Vassar College’s political science department coming in December. Adult ed committee chair Susan Needelman’s homemade refreshments provided an extra treat at many of the sessions. For more information, contact Susan at adulted@vassartemple.org or go to our website, www.vassartemple.org.



Rabbi Golomb introduces Dr. Mouannes Hojairi (seated at the left) while Martin Charwat can be seen on the right.

CROP Walk Report

The local CROP Hunger Walk, sponsored by the Dutchess County Interfaith Council, is one of the most successful events of its kind in the nation. Last year, the local walk was the second most lucrative walk in the northeastern United States and the 28th most successful walk in the whole country!

Vassar Temple has a long history of supporting this worthwhile endeavor, and this year’s event, held on October 21st, was no exception. Members and friends of the

congregation contributed \$1,741 to sponsor Rabbi Golomb and our other walkers: Jen, Steve & Sam Dahnert; Ron Rosen and Mariah Robishaw; Ralph Schwartz; and Dave and Ilana Wolf. Special thanks are also extended to Sandra Mamis for contributing to the bake sale, and to Joel & Linda Babas, Paul Ciminello, Doi Cohen, Ed Garber, and Marian Schwartz (registration chair) for working at the registration table. Thanks to each and every one of you who sponsored the walkers. The

funds raised through the walk will be used to ease the pain of hunger in our local and worldwide communities.

*Dave Wolf
Vassar Temple CROP Walk Recruiter*



Meditation Group Meets on December 4th

The meditation group led by Linda Cantor and Ed Rosenberg will hold its next monthly meeting on Tuesday, December 4th from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the East Chapel. At each session, there is a sitting meditation, a walking meditation, and either chanting or a short reading. There will also be time for sharing and for questions related to the practice. Both experienced meditators and those new to the practice are warmly welcomed.

Please let office manager Sandi Rugar know if you are planning to attend some or all of the sessions by contacting the temple office, 454-2570 or office@vassartemple.org.

New Idea from Your *Reyut* Committee

Our *Reyut* (Friendship) committee is trying something new to assist members who are in need of meals during difficult times of illness or family crisis. While many of you have generously provided complete meals in the past, often what is needed is just one or two portions of something nourishing. Please consider setting aside a serving once in a while when you cook, or have something left over, and dropping it off when you come to temple for other reasons. I have placed a clearly marked “*Reyut*” bin in the temple freezer where small packages can be dropped off. The plastic bin will serve as a central collection point from where the food can be accessed for delivery by a *Reyut* volunteer.

If you can help with this ongoing effort, please note the following:

- No pork or shellfish may be brought into the temple kitchen
- Foods should be enclosed in a small freezer bag
- Packages should be labeled with date, content, and any cooking/reheating directions
- Items that are ready to go into a microwave oven are ideal

If you have an item to share, please send me a brief email (reyut@vassartemple.org) alerting me to its presence, so that I can make sure your donation is delivered to someone in need in a timely manner.

Thank you in advance for your continued kindness to your fellow congregants.

Susan Karnes Hecht
Reyut Committee Chair



Shabbat Noach Included Animal Guests

At our Friday evening Shabbat service on October 19th, marking the reading of the Torah portion about Noah, Sandra Mamis spoke about the Torah's teaching on human responsibility for animal welfare, with the “help” of her therapy cat, Peanut. After the service, several therapy animals from Visiting Positive Paws and their human partners joined many congregants of all ages in the social hall.



A Friendly Evening of Torah Rolling at the Mamis House

On Saturday evening, November 10th, about 25 people enjoyed the Havdalah service, Israeli food and music, and lots of schmoozing, as well as the opportunity to be close to our Torah scrolls as they were unrolled and re-rolled. This helps to preserve the scrolls and gives us the chance to learn more about the Torah from Rabbi Golomb. Thanks to Sandra and Harry for their warm hospitality!

To see more photos, go to the photo gallery at www.vassartemple.org



Contributions

RABBI'S FUND

Peter & Karleen Dorn

IN MEMORY OF

Joshua Himelstein Kathy & Kent Mardon

IN APPRECIATION OF

Rabbi Golomb "Peanut"

SUSTAINING FUND

IN MEMORY OF

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Ruth Muraskin Sandra & Harry Mamis

Frank DeGeorge Beverly Metlis

IN HONOR OF
Ken Scheer's special birthday
Ed & Vivian Garber
Doi Cohen

IN APPRECIATION OF
Vassar Temple's Adult Ed Classes
Sandra Schimel Bilski

MAZAL TOV
To Perla & Chuck Kaufman
on the birth of their granddaughter,
Ida Roselyn Kaufman
Joan & David Posner



December 7

Miriam Feitelson
Lillian Feldman
Sadie Breit
Sandra Lipschitz
Martin Markowitz
Julius Klein
Leo Loeb
Carl Gross
Minnie Shapiro
Dr. Morton Bard
Matilda "Tillie" Gordon
Lori Feldman
Rhoda Brooke
Ruth Bagun
Elsa Cohen
Shirley Ernest
William Schwartz
Charles Feldman
Rhea Sumner
Albert J. Levy
Clara Lewin
Allen E. Dampf
Jordan Taylor
Mildred Tauber
Seth A. Erlebacher

December 14

Helen Wrobel
Esther Yelsky
Abe Barnett
Anna Cairo
Erna Konheim
Eileen Dermody
Aaron Slote
Annette Livingston
Kleinfeld Katz
Ruth Seegal Cohen
Marilyn Sirkus
Leonard Moody
Charles Kovacs, DDS
Ilse B. Dreyfuss
Susan Marash
Cynthia Rosenblum
Leah Michel
Maurice L. Troeger
Albert Barchilon
Michael Goldfinger
Rabbi Sigmund Israel

December 21

Beatrice Snyder
Lottie Glick
Nathaniel Rubin
Belle G. Adler
Miriam Levine
Evelyn Lesser
Joseph Weber
William Robinowitz
Stella W. Renick
Goldie Bleich
Sadie Cohen Friedland
James Engel
Dr. Doris Berlin-Acker
Philip Wolfson
Louis Rosen
Fay Gordon
Selma Kahn
Leah W. Cohen
Michael Schenberg
Philip Friedland
Ida Krevolin
Herman R. Gross
Ruth Stein

December 28

Deborah H. Jacobs
Celia Kraut
Joseph L. Kahn
Barnard Cohen
Harry Schneider
Reine Reinhart
Beatrice S. Kaye
Dr. Joseph R. Levy
Joseph Fa'gut
Henry Solomonson
Wilford Jordan
Harry Wojcki
Barnet B. Shelton
Julius Bloch
Roberta Weiss Gordon
Myra Scholnick
Frances Rosen
Morris Effron
Meyer Miller
Rose Brond
Jean Citron
Harry Fogle
Keith Warner Landau
DeWitt Fischman
Louis Satz
Yetta Horn

Yahrzeits

Memorial Board Plaques

Honor the memory of your loved ones with a plaque on the Memorial Board in the sanctuary. For information, call Sandi at the Temple office at 454-2570.

Jewish War Veterans

The Jewish War Veterans, Post 625, will hold its monthly meeting on December 2, 2012 in the Bingo Room at Congregation Schomre Israel on Park Avenue, Poughkeepsie NY.

For further information contact Post Commander Ralph Schwartz at RSCHWA9881@aol.com or (845) 849-0025.

Planned Gifting

I am interested in receiving information regarding planned gifts or bequests for Vassar Temple.

Send to: Vassar Temple, 140 Hooker Ave., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Name

Address

Home Phone

e-mail

Vassar Temple Bulletin

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Rabbi:	Paul Golomb
Rabbi Emeritus:	Stephen A. Arnold
Religious School Director:	Dr. Joel M. Hoffman
Cantorial Soloist:	Elisa Dugatkin
Organist:	Joseph Bertolozzi
President:	Robert Abrams
1st Vice President:	Bob Ritter
2nd Vice President:	Marge Groten
Secretary:	Jeff Brenner
Treasurer:	Brian Silverman
Sisterhood President:	Lisa-Sue Quackenbush
Men's Club Co-Presidents:	Jeff Brenner & Dave Wolf
Immediate Past President:	Sandra Mamis
Youth Group President:	Rachel Marcus



December 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 9am Torah Study 10am New Paths 6pm Gala
2 9am-12pm RS K-7 9:30am Hanukkah Sale 11:30am Lunch Box	3 January Bulletin deadline 7:15pm Ritual	4 10am SEP 7:30pm Meditation	5 6:30-8:30pm RS 8-12	6 10am SEP 11:30am Talmud 7pm 2012 Elections	7 CAN JAM Weekend 6pm Shabbat Service Birthday Blessings	8 EREV HANUKKAH 1st Candle Lit 9am Torah Study 10am Morning Service and Program
9 9am-12pm RS K-7 9:30am Hanukkah Sale	10 Flyers Deadline	11 10am SEP	12 6:30-8:30pm RS 8-12	13 10am SEP 11:30am Talmud	14 6pm Shabbat Dinner 7:30pm Hanukkah Candle Light Service	15 9am Torah Study 10am New Paths
16 9am-12pm RS K-7 10:30am Tiny Temple	17 7pm Board	18 10am SEP	19 2pm VTS Book Club 6:30-8:30pm RS 8-12	20 10am SEP 11:30am Talmud	21 6pm Shabbat Service	22 9am Torah Study
23 NO RS	24	25 Office Closed	26 NO RS	27 10am SEP 11:30 Talmud	28 6pm Service	29 9am Torah Study
30 NO RS	31					