



Vassar Temple Bulletin

Congregation Brethren of Israel אחים ישראל Founded 1848 Volume 159 No. 2 February 2012



Shabbat Services at 6:00 p.m.

During the winter months of January and February we continue to hold Friday evening Shabbat services 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.

This timing enables you to come to Shabbat services straight from work on winter evenings and arrive home in time for Shabbat dinner – or meet old and new friends at the services and then go out for supper.

**“Vision the future of Reform Judaism”
on Feb 11; see page 4**

“Bread and Circuses: The Race for the White House in 2012”

Vassar College political science professor, and Vassar Temple member, Sidney Plotkin will discuss the implications of the Republican primaries at two adult education sessions on Tuesday evenings, January 31st and February 14th, at 7:00 p.m. at the temple. Everyone is welcome to attend one or both classes, taught by an outstanding teacher, to learn about and discuss a subject which will affect us all.

Upcoming Events

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In Memory of Seth Erlebacher



On December 16, 2011 Vassar Temple lost its president, Seth A. Erlebacher. Seth died suddenly while attending the Biennial convention of the Union for Reform Judaism in Washington,

DC, about which he had been enthusiastically blogging for the benefit of all our members. These facts are emblematic of two of the many ways in which Seth strengthened our congregation: through his devotion to Reform Judaism and by bringing us the advantages of online social networking. Another of his special interests was our programs for children and youth, including URJ summer camps.

In the wider community, he served on the board of the Community Hebrew School and was a supporter of the Jewish Community Center. Seth manned the Vassar Temple booth at the Shalom on Grand Festival both years it was held. He

wasn't sure at first how it would go, but ended up staying the whole time, enjoying the interaction with the public and talking about Vassar Temple.

Rabbi Richard Jacobs, the new president of the URJ, spoke at Seth's funeral, pointing out that “over and over again throughout his life Seth Erlebacher said *Hineni* (here I am) to those around him... This is the response Jewish leaders have spoken throughout our history; Seth gave freely of his time and wisdom as he served his congregation and people.”

Seth's colleagues at IBM described him as a master of technology who could explain the most complex things in an understandable way. They valued his warm friendship and his willingness to help and mentor them, as well as his integrity and sense of joy. His love for and pride in his wife Melissa and daughters Rachel and Brianna were as obvious to his co-workers as they were to everyone at Vassar Temple.

Our member Susan Budson Fink described Seth as “a man of God, who

lived within the community, observing God's laws, fulfilling his obligations, and connecting...with his children, his family, friends and the community...Seth was that special person whose passion for Judaism and love of his family and friends made our community a better place.”

On our temple blog Rabbi Golomb wrote about “Seth's innate integrity: a sense of internal oneness; the ability to meld together the distinct and diverse elements of one's life into a consistent and reinforcing whole.” Because of his integrity, Rabbi continued, “Seth was truly a *tzaddik*...[His] presence in our lives, however brief in the greater scheme of things, has made a profound impression. Each one of us is better off for the blessing his life bestowed upon us.”

As our past president Sandra Mamis said at Seth's funeral, “when each of us chooses to walk in his footsteps, Seth will remain as a living and influential presence among us.”

Rabbi's Message: 60% of ISRAEL THANKS YOU



Extraordinary demands are made on our time and money. Unless you are part of that vaunted 1% of the nation that has enjoyed true economic security over the past few decades, we have had to be quite careful and intentional with our allocations, especially to items that are not considered fundamental necessities. It is in this context that I want especially to acknowledge and thank more than 125 Vassar Temple members who made the extra contribution in order to be members of ARZA as well.

ARZA is the Reform Judaism's formal representative in the world Zionist movement. For the past twenty years, it has been the dominant voice for religious non-Orthodox Jewish life in the State of Israel. Politically, Israel is divided among secular and Orthodox religious parties. Given the state of coalition politics in the formation of a ruling government, the Orthodox parties have enjoyed outsized influence. The result has been the promotion of economic and social policies that greatly favor a relatively small and not very popular segment of the population.

Religiously, however, the majority of Israel's Jewish population – consistently over 60% in polls – are neither

wholly secular nor Orthodox. They have no political voice, and it would be impossible to create one, but they are not without influence. Much of it comes from ARZA, which in coalition with other institutions – such as Hebrew Union College, the World Union for Progressive Judaism, and the New Israel Fund – have created synagogues, trained liberal rabbis and educators, and underwritten the Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC).

Israel needs this voice, and we who care for the well-being of the Jewish State need ARZA. The contribution is only \$36, a small portion of Vassar Temple dues. It is, however, a very big and important statement. I value your support for progressive Jewish life in Israel, and personally thank all of you who made this commitment.

Rabbi Paul Golomb

President's Message



As I write this at the beginning of January, what a month we've had ... a virtual roller coaster of emotions – Seth's and my anticipation of and attendance at the

URJ Biennial; the shocking and untimely passing of our beloved Temple president, Seth Erlebacher, z"l; the congregation's joyous celebration of Hanukkah; the hopes for a new year.

I would like to start by thanking all of those who were instrumental in helping during the hours, days and weeks after Seth passed away. It was an extremely difficult and emotional time for all of us, and it was heartening to experience the support. In particular, but certainly not exclusively, I would like to thank Susan Hecht who provided a liaison between the Erlebacher household and the many temple members who wanted to help, orchestrating a phenomenal coordination of food and other assistance; Sandra Mamis, David Lampell, Brian Silverman, and Tamara Gruszko for ensuring that Temple business was taken care of while I was away; my wife Marianne and daughter Danielle for meeting me at the conference center, and all of the people who expressed their support for and confidence in me. I cannot thank you enough.

The rabbinical support staff at the Biennial was wonderful, keeping me

informed, and ensuring that I wasn't alone in the subsequent hours. I extend my particular thanks to Rabbi Marcus Burstein, who accompanied me before and after we were notified of Seth's death, and Rabbi Rex Perlmeter, who went to the hospital with Seth. Seth's passing was announced by the rabbi leading the Friday night service at the Biennial (with 4500+ people in the room). Several attendees expressed their shock and sympathy to me – people who did not know Seth, as well as some who had just met him over the prior couple days.

In mentally reviewing these events, I realize that what I had known for a long time became so vividly true as to appear in 3D. Vassar Temple is truly a family for many of us, especially those who have very small or geographically scattered families. While belonging to Vassar Temple brings different experiences and benefits for various members and families, one benefit shines brilliantly: support from the congregation. Vassar Temple is a macrocism of regular families, with different factions, cliques and even irritations at times, but when there is a crisis, everyone jumps in to provide assistance.

Rabbi Richard Jacobs, the incoming president of the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), honored Seth and all of us by speaking at Seth's funeral. He was moved by the service and later wrote a wonderful essay to allow all 900 congregations of the URJ to share our pride in Seth and our loss. His message, *Hineni Biennial*:

The Enduring Legacy of Seth Erlebacher, reflects the way Seth embodied the best of Reform Judaism.

"His devotion to his family and his faith was constant and unwavering. Each week he looked forward to sharing the joy of Shabbat with his community. Seth's commitment was infectious... Seth understood the serious challenges facing our congregations and our movement, but as a true leader he was always focused on turning challenges into opportunities. It couldn't be clearer that great congregations come in all sizes and are found throughout our Union. Nurtured by dedicated lay leaders like Seth Erlebacher, our congregations make a difference in the lives of our members every day."

If you have not yet read Rabbi Jacobs' message, you can locate the link at the upper right of the Temple web site home page.

I have assumed the position of Vassar Temple President earlier and under very different circumstances than any of us could have expected. Regardless, we now need to move forward, keeping in mind Seth's vision, all doing our part to ensure that some of his strongest visions – such as Temple youth education, attendance at URJ camps, finding ways to leverage technology to improve Temple life – are fulfilled. The business of Vassar Temple will continue to be run smoothly with the tireless support of Temple officers, board members and committee chairs, as well as with the help of all our members.

Bob Abrams

2 **Note: All Board and Committee Meetings, except Executive Sessions, are open to all Temple members. Community Hebrew School of Dutchess County is the Hebrew Education Division of Vassar Temple.**

From Our Religious School Director:

December 21, 2011



Today I buried a friend.

In attendance at the funeral with me was the president of the largest movement of Jews the world has seen; other clergy; representatives of neighboring communities; members of various intersecting business, social, and religious circles; friends; and numerous acquaintances. Toward the front were his grieving parents, wife, and two teenage daughters.

I met Seth Erlebacher only a few months ago, in his role of Temple President, at a meeting of three people concerning the religious school and whether I would run it. We talked about vision and salary, education and culture, supervision techniques and attendance policies, work hours and commuting distances. Follow-up discussions were devoted to health insurance, keys, voice mail, computers, e-mail, security codes, and myriad other details related to a new job.

A job interview is always an odd way

to meet someone, and this was no exception. By the time the process was concluded, I knew where Seth stood on everything we'd discussed --- he preferred to lock the door before arming the alarm, for example, and he was adamant that e-mail addresses should be part of the Temple's branding --- but I didn't know who he was.

Seth was always around the Temple, though, giving us lots of informal opportunities to talk in addition to our formal meetings. We discussed mundane matters like budget lines and teacher salaries, and lofty goals like how to foster Jewish commitment. I remember one particular day I came to Seth when I discovered what could have been a huge problem. He responded with a cheery if ironic one-word answer: "excellent!" His simple reply was laden with complex implications: We'll fix this together. We won't let it stand in our way as we build for the future. And for sure, we won't let it stop us from having fun now.

When September came, Seth wasn't the only Erlebacher to hang out around the Temple. I saw Rachel each week because she was one of the 3rd-grade teachers and part of my job was to supervise her. It didn't take me long to see how talented she is. At one point, at a congregational dinner, I think, I told Seth how lucky Rachel's

students were. He was polite enough to say "thank you," but his eyes replied, "yes, I know."

Brianna, too, who was both a student on Wednesdays and soon a student teacher on Sunday mornings, was particularly helpful to me, especially in my first few weeks, before I knew how the teachers and students expected things to run. I remember I said something to Seth about how wonderful Brianna was, and, again, courtesy won out in his polite reply, but I could practically hear his body language: "You don't have to tell me. I already know."

Seth and I talked about the school, of course, and the Temple, about summer camps and the future of the Jewish people. We celebrated Shabbat together. We mocked the ineptitude in the world (sometimes, sadly, our own), chatted about current events, and planned for a better tomorrow.

Six months ago I met the Temple President. Today I buried a friend.

*Dr. Joel Hoffman,
Religious School Director*

Vassar Temple and Temple Beth-El to Hold Joint Shabbaton, March 2-3

This year the annual Joint Shabbaton sponsored by Vassar Temple and Temple Beth-El will take place during the weekend of March 2-3. The guest speaker for the Shabbaton will be Rabbi Elyse Goldstein who has been the Rabbinic Director of the Kolel Adult Centre for Liberal Jewish Learning in Toronto for the past 20 years. An accomplished academic, Rabbi Goldstein is an articulate and passionate teacher with a nation-wide reputation. During the five years she served as Rabbi of Temple Beth David in Canton, Massachusetts, the congregation grew from 80 families to over 200 families.

The Shabbaton will begin with a joint Shabbat service at Vassar Temple on Friday, March 2nd at 7:30 p.m. during which Rabbi Goldstein will speak about "Growing the 21st Century Synagogue: Lessons from Success." An oneg Shabbat will follow the service.

The 10:00 a.m. joint Shabbat morning service at Temple Beth-El on Saturday, March 3rd will be followed at noon by a Kiddush Luncheon and a talk by Rabbi Goldstein called "Women are from Genesis, Men are from Leviticus: Do Men and Women Read the Torah Differently?" Please RSVP for the luncheon by February 27th by calling 845-454-0570 or emailing tbelpgm@hvcbiz.rr.com.

The author of *ReVisions: Seeing Torah through a Feminist Lens* and *The Women's Torah Commentary*, *The Women's Haftarah Commentary* and *New Jewish Feminism* (chosen as finalist for the National Jewish Book Award), Rabbi Goldstein is the recipient of numerous awards, including the most prestigious award in Jewish education, the internationally recognized Covenant Award for Exceptional Jewish Educators in 2005. She is also the author of a self-guided adult study textbook on Women

and Judaism called *Seek Her Out*, published by the URJ Press. She is currently creating a new Reform congregation in downtown Toronto which will be up and running by the High Holy Days of 2012.

The Joint Shabbaton is being underwritten by the Lipschutz Fund of Vassar Temple and by the Sherman Fund of Temple Beth-El. All members of the community are warmly invited to attend any or all of the events.



Worship Services

Friday, February 3

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service

Saturday, February 4

10:00 a.m. New Paths Service

Friday, February 10

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service

Saturday, February 11

9:00 a.m. Torah Study

10:00 a.m. Shabbat Morning Service

Friday, February 17

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

Saturday, February 18

9:00 a.m. Torah Study

10:00 a.m. New Paths Service

Friday, February 24

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

Saturday, February 25

9:00 a.m. Torah Study

Friday, March 2

7:30 p.m. Joint Shabbaton with Temple Beth-El

Saturday, March 3

10:00 a.m. Joint Shabbaton at Temple Beth-El

New Paths Services

Please join us in the sun-lit East Chapel on Saturdays, February 4th and 18th at 10:00 a.m. Each New Paths service, whether rabbi-led or lay-led, provides a unique and thoughtful Shabbat morning experience. We focus on letting the service get through us, rather than getting through the service. A brief informal light kiddush follows. For more information, please contact Marian Schwartz at mschwa9882@aol.com or Rabbi Golomb at rabbi@vassartemple.org or 845-454-2570.

Vision the Future of Reform Judaism on February 11th

Vassar Temple has been a Reform Jewish congregation at least since 1920 so the future of our congregation is closely tied to the future of Reform Judaism. After the Shabbat morning Torah service at 10:00 on Saturday, February 11th, Rabbi Golomb will guide a discussion visioning the Reform Movement and our own future as part of it. Your participation is important and your point of view, ideas and opinions are essential as we look ahead.

Whether you are attracted by a moving Torah service, an interesting 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 interactive study of the Torah portion of the week with Rabbi Golomb. A family-friendly Torah service will begin at 10:00 in the sanctuary, 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 hold our interactive visioning program, and at noon we will enjoy a kiddush together. Plan to join us!

Scriptural Readings

February 3 & 4 *B'shalah (Shabbat Shirah)*

Exodus 14:15-16:10

Haftarah: Judges 4:4-5:31

February 10 & 11 *Yitro*

Exodus 19:1-25

Haftarah: Isaiah 6:1-7:6, 9:5-6

February 17 & 18 *Mishpatim (Shabbat Shekalim)*

Exodus 22:4-23:19 (30:11-16)

Haftarah: II Kings 12:1-17

February 24 & 25 *T'ruma*

Exodus 26:1-30

Haftarah: I Kings 5:26-6:13

March 3 & 4 *T'zaveh (Shabbat Zakhor)*

Exodus 28:31-29:18; (Deuteronomy 25:17-19)

Haftarah: I Samuel 15:2-34

Tiny Temple Learns about Purim

All preschoolers (age infant-5) and those who are raising them are invited to join in on the fun at Tiny Temple on Sunday, February 26th, from 10:30 to noon, while learning about the joyous holiday of Purim through crafts, story and song in a relaxed and friendly setting. The children are encouraged to come in costume, and as part of our snack we'll nosh some hamantaschen which the children can help to make. The adults will have an opportunity to meet others raising young Jewish children.

All are welcome to this free program regardless of Temple affiliation. Tiny Temple is held once a month during the school year, is always free of charge, and is sponsored by the Sisterhood. To assist in our planning and have your questions answered, please RSVP to tiny-temple@vassartemple.org



Shabbat Dinner on February 17th

At 7:15 p.m. on Friday, February 17th your whole family can enjoy an Italian dinner in our social hall after the 6:00 Shabbat service. All the food will be provided at a cost of \$10 per adult and \$5 per child age 5-12, with children under 5 eating free. Challah, salad and beverages will be provided by the Sisterhood. Bring a bottle of wine to share if you would like to.

To help us determine the right amount of food to buy, you must make your reservation for the dinner by Monday, February 13th through Laura Brundage at lbrundage@frontiernet.net or 227-4312. Checks made out to Vassar Temple Sisterhood with "February 17th Dinner" on the memo line should be mailed to 140 Hooker Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 by February 13th. Come and share the warmth of a cozy evening with your temple family!



Mazal Tov to...

Paula Landau who attended the wedding of her grandson Scott and Megan Landau in

December.

Vassar Temple Sisterhood Friendship Calendar

The 2012 Sisterhood calendar has been mailed or hand-delivered to everyone who bought an ad or listed a special date in it. You will note that it is bigger and better than ever! We have added an extra page to accommodate pictures of the past year – and what fond memories they bring to us! You will also see more ads; remember to thank our supporters and offer them your patronage.

We appreciate the participation of our congregational families for their listings, giving Rabbi Golomb the opportunity to wish you a happy birthday and/or anniversary from the *bimah* on Friday night.

May 2012 be a year of peace, good health and prosperity for all!

*Vassar Temple Sisterhood Calendar
Committee
Perla Kaufman, Chair*

Rides to Services and Temple Events Available

One of the services offered by our Reyut (Friendship) Committee is transportation to worship services and other events and programs at the temple. If you would like a ride to temple, please call Sandi Rugar in the temple office (454-2570), giving 4 days notice if possible. She will contact Susan Hecht, our Reyut Committee chair, who will arrange a ride for you.

On the other hand, if you are willing to occasionally give a ride to a fellow congregant, please leave your name and phone number with Sandi Rugar. With your help, Vassar Temple can truly be a caring community.

New 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!

In Remembrance

Vassar Temple mourns the loss of our Temple President

Seth Erlebacher
Husband of Melissa Erlebacher
Father of Rachel & Brianna Erlebacher

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

- Leonard Moody, brother of Liz Freedman
- Eileen Dermody, mother of Carol Menken
- Philip Friedland, brother of Esther Reisman

Refuah Shelemah

...to our Temple members, **Lewis Krevolin** and **Naomi Goldberg** who were recently hospitalized.

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.

Pulpit Flowers

- February 3 In memory of Ronah Gordon Posner from David & Joan Posner.
- February 10 In memory of Evelyn Kahn from Muriel & Matt Lampell.
- February 17 Vassar Temple Sisterhood
- February 24 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.

Dear Vassar Temple Family:

One is not to say 'thank you' for helping a family during *shiva*, but Al and I want you to know that your acts of kindness were very much appreciated. You came to the house with food, offered us words of condolence, told Al and me heart-warming stories about Seth, or merely sat with us in silence.

Never have we seen such an outpouring of help from a community. When we left Seth and Melissa's home on Thursday to continue sitting *shiva* at Seth's childhood home, we were confident that Melissa, Brianna and Rachel would be well taken care of by the Vassar Temple community. We realize now how much the Erlebacher family is loved by the Vassar family.

I wish that I could personally thank each and every one of you but that is just impossible. Just know that we will never forget what you did for us. We know that we will always be a part of the Vassar Temple Family. With much gratitude and appreciation for all you are and all you did,...

Dolores and Al Erlebacher

Vassar Temple Bulletin, published monthly

Publisher: Marianne Abrams
Editor: Doi Cohen
Technical Support: Bob Abrams

Articles for the March bulletin must be submitted to the temple office by Feb 1.. 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.

BAKERS NEEDED

Please join us for Sisterhood's annual
Hamantaschen BAKING DAY

Make friends while making Hamantaschen
for our Purim service and for delivery to homebound congregants
and out of town college students

Sunday, February 26th
9:00am to 1:00pm in the Temple kitchen

RSVP to Judy Rosenfeld
635-2414 or Hamantaschen@vassartemple.org

Please bring one batch of dough-recipe available from Judy or through the "What's New at Vassar Temple" link at www.vassartemple.org and a rolling pin. Remaining ingredients, as well as fun and laughter will be provided



Book Club to Discuss "The Glass Castle" on February 22nd



The Vassar Temple Sisterhood Book Club's discussion of "The Glass Castle: A Memoir" by Jeannette Walls has been rescheduled for Wednesday afternoon, February 22nd at 2:00 p.m. in the Community Room of Collegeview Tower, 141 Fulton Ave., Poughkeepsie.

The ideals and stubborn non-conformity of the author's parents were both their curse and their salvation. Her father was a charismatic, brilliant man who, when sober, captured his children's imaginations and taught them how to embrace life fearlessly. Her mother was addicted to excitement and much preferred painting

and writing to caring for her four children. Jeannette Walls describes her parents with deep affection in spite of the dysfunction of their family. This moving tale of unconditional love is available in paperback and from the local library system.

Diane Sterdt will lead the discussion, to which everyone is welcome, and light refreshments will be available. To RSVP or get more information, contact Doi Cohen at 462-6193 or dcohen1230@gmail.com.

Holidays Through a Jewish Lens: LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY

In his time, Abraham Lincoln was known as the Great Emancipator and moved to open paths toward racial equality in the United States. Since the Civil Rights Era of the mid-20th century, Jewish leaders throughout North America have worked with others to end discrimination and to speak about issues of inequity and prejudice that affected both the Black and White communities. In the words of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, "To act in the spirit of religion is to unite what lies apart, to remember that humanity as a whole is God's beloved child."

Wind Chill Fund

Hudson River Housing would like to celebrate its 30th Anniversary by raising \$30,000 for the Wind Chill Fund. The cost to house a homeless guest at the Hillcrest shelter is approximately \$36 per night. This number has special significance in the Jewish religion: Double Chai (Double Life) – sustaining the life that night, and providing new opportunities for living in the day to come.

If you can see your way to do so, please consider donating \$36 to the fund, but be assured that any amount you can donate will be put to excellent use. Whether people are in need because they lost a job, had their home devastated by a natural disaster, are the victims of abuse, are veterans returning from war, or for any

other reason, Hudson River Housing's Coalition for the Homeless will do its utmost to ensure that everyone of every age has a safe, dignified place to call home.

And they don't stop at providing shelter—their services to the homeless include help and referrals for healthcare, counseling, education, and other services, while advocating for safer, more inclusive, more livable communities.

Cash donations may be placed any time in the Temple tzedakah box located near the staircase, and donations by check may be made out to Vassar Temple with "Wind Chill Fund" on the memo line.

Social Action Committee

Interfaith Story Concert on February 5th

The annual Peace Story Concert sponsored by the Dutchess County Interfaith Council will be held this year on Sunday, February 5th at 2:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 67 South Randolph Avenue, Poughkeepsie. Story tellers Lorraine Hartin-Gelardi, Muriel Horowitz, Jack Maguire, Karen Pillsworth and Mary Rachel Platt will focus on the subject of Peace and music will be part of the program. All are welcome and proceeds raised from the \$10 free-will donation will be donated to Grace Smith House to benefit victims of domestic violence.

From the Finance Committee

We want to express our sincere thanks and acknowledge the contributions of all of those members and their guests who so generously supported our High Holy Day Appeal for 2011. In these difficult times, with so many financial burdens on all, we are grateful for this support. This listing is as of December 31, 2011 and will be updated as additional donations are received.



Robert & Marianne Abrams	David & Susan Hecht	Eleanor Pupko
Joanne Abraskin	Howard & Emily Himelstein	Kurt & Lisa-Sue Quackenbush
Daniel & Susan Albinder	Irma Jacobs	Rose Reid
William & Susan Barbash	Joel & Claudia Kelson	Martin & Marilyn Revitz
Charles & Joan Blanksteen	Allen & Barbara Kram	Robert & Mary Ritter
Gabe & Catherine Bokor	Benjamin Krevolin	Ron Rosen
Thomas & Laura Brundage	David & Marilyn Lampell	Dr. Loren & Charlene Rosenthal
Joseph & Deborah Carbo	Matthew & Muriel Lampell	Elinor Rothenberg
Martin & Eleanor Charwat	Steven & Linda Lant	Dr. Justin & Deborah Scheer
Paul & Andi Ciminello	Anne Lescher	Kenneth & Bonnie Scheer
Doris Cohen	Louis & Candace Lewis	Gilbert & Arlene Seligman
Robert & Joanne Dyson	Elaine Lipschutz	Brian & Helen Silverman
Dawn Effron	Richard & Marsha Lowry	Drs. Howard & Shirl Susser
Seth & Melissa Erlebacher	Dr. Harry & Sandra Mamis	Gloria Turk
Edward & Vivian Garber	Stanley & Wendy Marcus	Drs. Jed & Stella Turk
Dr. Jeff & Nan Genshaft	Lila Matlin	Steven & Shelley Turk
Dr. Arthur & Margery Groten	Mark & Kathleen Metzger	Lillian Weigert
Dr. Adrian & Tamara Gruszko	Joan Ollendorf	Lewis & Hilary Wrobel
	David & Joan Posner	



Yahrzeits

February 3

Pauline Gross
Leonard H. Arnold
Virginia Newman Livingston
Irving Wrobel
Pedro Gitler
Nancy Levinson
Herbert Schiffman
Jack Freedman
Alan Pack Greller
Russell B. Oppenheimer, DVM
Ronah Gordon Posner
Susan Matlin
Sara Rosenberg
Gertrud Rothstein
George Schoenbrun
Alice Davidson
Paul M. Schwartz, MD
Harold Devorsetz
Morris Worona
Jacqueline Sydney Colodner
Michael Sommerfield
Augusta Wurtzel
Reba Gold
Jane Kramer
Jeanette Bergman
Arlene Mates
Martha Held
Dorothy Parish
Davida Krevolin
Sylvia Mednick
Abraham Ginsberg
Elizabeth Satz
Rose Plotkin

February 10

Dr. M. Alden Weingart
Evelyn Slote Kahn
Leo Livingston
Leona Lowry Engel
Hon. Henry Morgenthau, Jr.
Lillian Geber
Dr. Lawrence Schuyler
Dr. Samuel Levitch
Sabina Jacobs
Mary Hyman
Evelyn Brown
Gary M. Zimmer
Samuel Warshaw
Herman Kraut
Leon Alpers
Lillian Feldman
Reuben Wieseman
Evelyn Bersak
Timothy Creedon
William Hyman
Harold Robinowitz
Jules H. Lippmann
Armand H. Newman
Lawrence Edell
Owen J. Sacks
Sidney I. Love
Joseph Drobner
Jarrod Harrington
Benjamn Uttal
Rabbi Marcus Kramer

February 17

Jacob Greenberg
Mary R. Scheer
Freda Reifler
Goldie Abraskin
Rosanne Weber
Shirley Freedman
Jacob Erdreich, DMD
Henrietta Greenberg
Louise S. Rosen
Louis Kovacs
Isadore Weisman
Ida Scope
David Charles Albert
Dr. Irma Koltai
Bernard Miller
Vladmir M. Konheim, MD
Sylvia Cantor
Robert Toroker
Anne Alpers
Alec Stall
Lewis Schwartz
Walter L. Mock
Wendy E. Newman
David Haber
Milton Rauh
Robert Joseph
Ida Baskin Schwartz
David Stephen Satz
Augusta Steinman
Joseph Moselle
Aaron Estrin

February 24

George Laks
Stanton Lipschutz
Stuart Alpers
Esther Frances Goldberg
Jack Frankel
Paul S. Goldberg
Irving M. Bloch
Ruth Levitt
Mildred Gould
Hugh Weston
Shirley Kaskowitz
Harry Lewis
Fannie Kagan
Irving Fink
Gloria Fischman
Ethel Haber Kohan
Ida Klein
Milton Kramer
Edward Freedman
Shirley E. Reifler
Matilda Bancheck
Stanley Soirefman
Harry Lashinsky
Celia Frank

March 4th Lunch Box Plans

Looking ahead, on Sunday, March 4th the Sisterhood will be cooking and serving a meal featuring chili con carne at the Lunch Box at the Family Partnership Center from 11:30 to 2:30. You can help by donating 3 lbs. of ground beef browned with diced onions or 12 pieces of fruit (bananas are a favorite; grapes should be in small bags). Food may be dropped off at the Temple before that Sunday, clearly marked for Lunch Box. (Be sure to leave meat in the refrigerator.) We also welcome anyone who wants to have fun while helping to cook and serve the meal.

Volunteers and food donors should contact Lisa-Sue Quackenbush, Sisterhood President, at sisterhood@vassar-temple.org or 876-5859 soon to aid in planning.

Request from our Youth for Lunch Box Help on February 5th

On Sunday, February 5th our Youth Group and Confirmation Class will be cooking and serving a meal featuring franks and beans at the Lunch Box at the Family Partnership Center from 11:30 to 2:30. You can help feed our hungry neighbors by donating 3 lbs. of beef franks or 12 pieces of fruit (bananas are a favorite; grapes should be in small bags). Food may be dropped off at the Temple before that Sunday, clearly marked for Lunch Box. (Be sure to leave hot dogs in the refrigerator.)

Volunteers and food donors should contact Judy Rosenfeld, Lunch Box Co-Captain for February 5th, at therosenfelds@hvc.rr.com or 635-2414 as soon as possible.

Social Action

Thanks to everyone in the congregation for the generosity that made Trim-a-Thanksgiving, the Chanukah Joy fund, and the annual Souper Sale, a chain of successful projects that resulted in full bellies and full hearts, plus lots of fun and camaraderie for everyone on the project teams.

We have many ongoing opportunities to keep the good times rolling:

- Volunteer to help with an upcoming Lunch Box (see related articles),
- Provide part of the suppertime meal for those at the homeless shelter (contact Linda Doherty at lindadoherty@myway.com or 914-474-0038
- With family, friends or on your own, record a talking book for a needy child (contact Susan Karnes Hecht through socialaction@vassartemple.org),
- Sign on to pack your car with a load of our CanJam foods just once and deliver it to a local food pantry (contact Nancy Samson, CanJam123@aol.com or 462-4828), or
- Join with others at the JCC to knit or crochet warm clothing and blankets for clients of area agencies (contact Perla Kaufman at membership@vassar-temple.org or 914-456-7309). Don't knit? This friendly interfaith group will be happy to show you how.

And if there is some other social action project you'd like to see happen, just contact Marian Schwartz at socialaction@vassartemple.org or 845-849-0025.

Talking Books



TALKING BOOKS, a social action project at Vassar Temple, creates a library of books with accompanying recordings for the use of local organizations.

Over the past three years we have completed 62 children's books. Our past beneficiaries include the Vassar Brothers pediatrics unit and the Center for Prevention of Child Abuse. Most recently, I had the pleasure of delivering a set of books to the Catherine Street Community Center.

Participants donate and record themselves reading books, which are then packaged and delivered as a gift from Vassar Temple. Recent readers include Jori Breite, Ilana Wolf, Natalie Rohr, and Nancy Samson. I am thrilled that we have had participation from outside of the congregation.

Readers usually select their own books, and until now they have all been donated to the above children's agencies. However, if you know someone – of any age – who is incapacitated in some way and would benefit from the gift of a recorded book, we would be happy to accept

these individual requests and match them to volunteer readers, including desires for specific books.

TALKING BOOKS has now come of age. We have acquired a digital voice recorder, and all recordings are saved to computer and burned to CD. This enables me to make additional copies without loss of recording quality, in case I receive extra copies of the books. Recording and packaging materials for this project are generously provided by the Groten Fund.

Individual and group efforts are welcome – the more creative the better! To create a “double mitzvah”, please consider making book purchases at Barnes & Noble using Vassar Temple SCRIP. The temple will receive a substantial benefit at no additional cost to you.

For further information or to sign up, please contact me at socialaction@vassar-temple.org. Thank you for your interest!

Susan Karnes Hecht

Comparative Religion at Temple Beth-El

“Comparative Religion: Diversity and Commonality” is the title of a series of discussions to be held on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at Temple Beth-El, 118 South Grand Avenue, Poughkeepsie. You are welcome to join faith leaders from around the Hudson Valley in conversation with Rabbi Neal Loewinger.

8 On February 7th the special guest will be Richard Lamorte, Chaplain and Campus Minister at Marist College. Advance registration through Susan Canning at 454-0570 or programs@templebethelpokny.org is encouraged.

Contributions

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IN MEMORY OF

Leonard Moody Lunch & Learn at JCC

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Seth Erlebacher Lunch & Learn at JCC

Marcia & Jeffrey Fishman

COMMUNITY TZEDAKAH FUND

IN MEMORY OF

Philip Friedland

Seth Erlebacher

Judy Harkavy & Stan Israel

Meditation Group Meets in February

The meditation group facilitated by Linda Cantor and Ed Rosenberg will meet on February 7th and 21st. At each session there will be a short reading and a bit of music followed by a 30-minute sitting meditation and an optional walking meditation. There will also be time for sharing and for questions related to the practice. Both experienced meditators and those new to the practice are welcome, whether or not you were part of the group before.

In case of bad driving weather, the class will be canceled. 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.

Jewish War Veterans Schedule Meeting

The Jewish War Veterans, Post 625, will hold its monthly meeting on February 5, 2012 at the Jewish Community Center, 110 S. Grand Avenue, Poughkeepsie NY. The meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m. (Breakfast is no longer provided). A nominating committee will be appointed.

In the event of inclement weather, announcements will be on Cumulus Radio: 101.5 WPDH, 1490 WKNY, 92.7/76.9 WRRV, 94.3/97.3 The WOLF, 1390/1340 OLDIES, 97.7 The Mix Mark Bolger.

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

Get out of those winter doldrums.....
And exercise!

It lifts the spirits and is a healthy way to start 2012!

Need some equipment?

Whether you are looking for gear to start

a rock climbing adventure or
just for some videos to use while exercising in your own home,
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Shopping with gift cards from Vassar Temple
will help keep you and the temple in good shape!

For more information, contact our SCRIP Coordinator,
Sandra Mamis [scrip@vassartemple.org; 463-2678]

Be Part of our Spiel: "Purim in a Galaxy Far, Far Away"

Remember the terrific Purim spiel based on Peter Pan that we put on last year under the creative direction of Art Menken? This year our spiel will be based on Star Wars Episode 4 and will be just as much fun.

Actors, costumers, stage hands, makeup artists, special effects creators – people of all ages and interests will enjoy being part of this production on the evening of Saturday, March 10th after the hilarious reading of the Megillah of Esther. We will need a diverse cast, including children as young as 4-5 years of age.

To sign up for any aspect of this delightful project, adults and children should contact Art Menken at 914-456-1090 or 845-452-9726 or purim@vassar-temple.org by Friday, February 3rd. Your involvement is sure to help you chase away the winter blahs. Rehearsals will be minimal and fun will be maximal!

Bring Purim Pasta Again This Year

Purim traditionally provides a wonderful opportunity to give *Shalach Manot*, edible treats, to friends. Purim Pasta, a simple food-raising drive we have held at Vassar Temple each Purim for the past several years, is an extension of this great tradition, helping people in our wider community.

Once again on Purim this year you are invited to bring in boxes of pasta to shake when the Megillah is read (the boxes are the groggers!) and drown out the name of Haman with the noise of victory. After the March 10th service the boxes will be collected and delivered to a local food pantry.

Vassar Temple has reached out to other congregations in Dutchess County, inviting them to consider using Purim Pasta during their services too, so the

noise that night will be loud and spirited.

Please bring in your boxes of pasta for the Megillah reading at Vassar Temple on March 10th at 7:00 p.m. Macaroni, ziti, bowties - any will do! Get ready to shake them in the spirit of *Shalach Manot*. The opportunity to fight hunger with our Jewish brothers and sisters is just boxes away!

Nancy Samson

Social Action Committee

Pasta Dinner for Purim

As it did for the last two years with great success, the Men's Club will prepare and serve a pasta dinner on Saturday, March 10th at 5:45, before our Purim service and spiel. Mark your calendar now for a complete evening of fun for the whole family!

Taking the Food Stamp Challenge

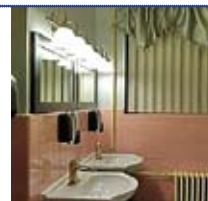
The Fighting Poverty with Faith initiative aims to focus people on issues of economic justice and the need to sustain vital social safety net programs. They devised the Food Stamp Challenge to help us all gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced every day by the 49 million Americans (half of them children) living in food-insecure households.

Participants accept the challenge to live for seven days on the standard Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamp) allotment of \$31.50 per adult per week. Many URJ rabbis, including the new head of the URJ, Rabbi Richard Jacobs, have taken the Challenge. Rabbi Jacobs noted that while he did get through the week, he had a car and was able to drive around to a variety of stores to get the best bargains. He spent every cent and was left with no reserves for hunger emergencies that came up and was unable to buy the healthiest foods on that budget. But

unlike those in food-insecure families, he had the security of knowing that his family was eating right, he had a good job to go to every day and a warm, safe home to go back to at night, and that at week's end he would be able to indulge in the foods of his choice in whatever quantity he desired.

Having survived the Food Stamp Challenge, Rabbi Jacobs observed that "The real test is what we do afterwards... There is no question in my mind that while the [Federal] budget is a moral document, neither political party can claim moral authority in setting forth its priorities. And they must not make these crucial decisions without all of us speaking up for the most vulnerable... May we never stop working for a society where the only hunger we know will be the hunger for righteousness."

Vassar Temple Social Action Committee



Restroom Renovations Completed

The Temple restrooms are now outfitted with brand new sinks and vanities, mirrors and lighting. The ceiling tiles have all been replaced. There are new window dressings: valences and coordinated vertical blinds. The new soap dispensers are clean and dispense a measured amount of gentle hand cleanser. The towel dispensers are motion activated. And ... there is art work to complement the new fixtures and add a bit of panache to the atmosphere!! Hope you like it!

I'd like to extend a big "Thank you" to the Sisterhood for their financial support to cover all remodeling costs.

Sandra Mamis

The congregation extends a big Thank You to you, Sandra, for making it all happen!



The Hanukkah Dinner and the Candle-lighting service on December 23rd were Wonderful!



More pictures can be seen on our website, www.vassartemple.org via the link to Photo Gallery on the left.

Fall Rummage Sale Thanks

Well, another Rummage sale has come and gone! We were very busy and sold lots of things to benefit Vassar Temple Sisterhood and, of course, Vassar Temple. Being busy at the sale is a good thing for us, but it also means times are a little tough for people right now and they welcome the ability to buy things they need at a very reasonable price. The Rummage crew does enjoy watching people find that coat, blouse, or knick knack that is just right for them; our encouragement is free of charge!

During Rummage week, we also are there on Wednesday evening for those who can help set up in the evening. To make it more fun, this time we had a pizza and salad party for everyone who helped with the setup. Some new volunteers came and pitched in, as well as some of our Wednes-

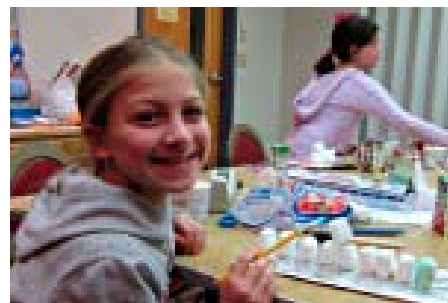
day night religious school students and our versatile religious school Director Dr. Joel Hoffman. It was fun and really helped us prepare for the sale day. Thanks again to the following people for their help and hard work:

Emily Himelstein, Ann Harmuth and her mom Jean, Wendy Giangrasso, Perla Kaufman, Melissa Erlebacher, Bonnie Scheer, Brianna Erlebacher, Kiley Quackenbush, Rachel Marcus, Ally Brundage, Danah Moore, Rachel Mamis, Judy Rosenfeld, Tamara Gruszko, Susan Needelman, Sue Barbash, Linda Babas, and Brian Silverman. If Emily Himelstein helped any more, we would have had to set up a cot; thanks again Emily! If we inadvertently left out your name, please forgive us and know we appreciate your help.

Hands-on Learning in our Religious School



The third grade baked challah.



The fourth grade made edible menorot before Hanukkah.

Thanks to Doi Cohen for publicity assistance and to the whole congregation for donations and spreading the word about our rummage sale. As always, thanks to George, Shane, and Sandi Rugar for doing a great job in office, set-up, and general logistical support. We look forward to seeing everyone again in April for our Spring sale.

*Roni Stein, Lisa-Sue Quackenbush, & Ann Lerman
Fall Rummage Sale Co-Chairs*

Vassar Temple Bulletin

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Cantorial Soloist:	Elisa Dugatkin
Organist:	Joseph Bertolozzi
President:	Robert Abrams
Vice President:	David Lampell
Secretary:	Tamara Gruszko
Treasurer:	Brian Silverman
Sisterhood President:	Lisa-Sue Quackenbush
Men's Club Co-Presidents:	Jeff Brenner & David Wolf
Youth Group President:	Rachel Erlebacher
Immediate Past President:	Sandra Mamis



February 2012 Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 March Bulletin 6:30-8:30pm RS 8-10 Pizza	2 10am SEP	3 CAN JAM Weekend 6pm Shabbat Service	4 9am Torah Study 10am New Paths
5 9am-12pm RS K-7 11:30am Lunch Box	6 7:15pm Ritual	7 10am SEP 12pm Talmud 7:30pm Meditation Group	8 TU B'SHEVAT Flyers Deadline 6:30-8:30pm RS 8-10	9 10am SEP	10 6pm Shabbat Service	11 9am Torah Study 10am Shabbat Morning Service
12 9am-12pm RS K-7	13	14 10am SEP 12pm Talmud 7pm Bread & Circuses: The Race for the White House in 2012	15 6:30-8:30pm RS 8-10	16 10am SEP	17 6pm Shabbat Service Birthday Blessings 7:15 pm Shabbat Dinner	18 9am Torah Study 10am New Paths
19 NO RS	20 PRESIDENT'S DAY	21 10am SEP 12pm Talmud 7:30pm Meditation Group	22 2pm VTS Book Club 6:30-8:30pm RS 8-10	23 10am SEP	24 6pm Shabbat Service	25 9am Torah Study
26 9am-12pm RS K-7 9am Hamantaschen Baking 10:30am Tiny Temple	27 7pm Board	28 10am SEP 12pm Talmud	29 6:30-8:30pm RS 8-10			