



Where You Belong

Vassar Temple Bulletin

Congregation Brethren of Israel אהלים ישראל Founded 1848 Volume 159 No.2 February 2013



6:00 Shabbat services through March 1st

See page 4 for details about special event on March 1st

BAKERS NEEDED!

Sisterhood's annual

HAMANTASCHEN BAKING DAY

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Upcoming Events

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Vassar After Hours: Tapas, Sangria and Beer on February 9th

Join us on Saturday February 9th from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. in the social hall for a relaxed evening of noshing, music, and schmoozing. We're going to dim the lights so the candles twinkle, putting us all in the mood for another wonderful Vassar After Hours event, a purely fun social evening with members and guests.

You will enjoy delicious (dairy) home-made Tapas (small plates), a selection of quality micro-brews from Half Time Beverage, and sangria. (Guests are welcome to bring a bottle of wine.) And there will be great live music – Rudy, a talented local musician, will entertain us with '50s and '60s covers. Sing along or shake a leg! Dance teacher and temple mem-

ber Mary Ritter will lead us in an ethnic dance lesson while our entertainer takes a break. This should be almost as much fun to watch as it is to participate, and you are welcome to do either!

The cover charge for this delightful evening is just \$20 per person. RSVP to Perla Kaufman at 914-456-7309 or brandaliz5@optonline.net by February 5th.

Our Youth Group will offer onsite child care that evening, complete with movies, popcorn, etc., for children aged 5 and older, at a cost of \$10 for one child and \$5 for each additional child in the same family. Tell Perla if you would like to take advantage of this opportunity, including the names and ages of your children.

Reserve Now for Purim Pasta Dinner

Our Men's Club will prepare and serve a pasta dinner on Saturday, February 23rd at 5:45, before our Purim service and spiel. Get in the happy Purim mood as you enjoy pasta with various sauces, salad, bread, and soft drinks. Bring wine to share, if you wish.

Please RSVP to mensclub@vassar-temple.org or the temple office, 454-2570, by February 15th and include the number of adults and children you are bringing. The cost of \$5/adult, \$3/child, under 5 free, maximum: \$15/family can be paid by check to the Vassar Temple Men's Club in advance, or by check or cash at the door.

Blowout Purim Celebration on February 23rd

Vassar Temple will be celebrating Purim in high style again this year on Saturday evening, February 23rd.

Begin by bringing your family to the pasta dinner sponsored by the Men's Club at 5:45 p.m. (See article on this page for details and make your reservation.)

Our service will begin at 7:00, and will feature a costume parade for children and a special Purim *spiel* called "The Wizard of Schnoz," written and produced by our own Art Menken.

Purim- continued on page 2

Save the Date!
Trivia Night April 27 7:30pm

A Panel of Elected Officials
after Shabbat Services on
Saturday Morning,
February 9th pg 3



Don't forget your Purim Pasta
on February 23rd, page 7

Rabbi's Message: THE GREAT PURIM SURVIVAL QUIZ: MASTER EDITION



Once more into the breach, my friends. Purim is a giddy celebration of survival. Surviving this quiz just might make you giddy. As usual, you are

free to Google, Bing, Yahoo, or Ask for answers. Or do as I do and ask your five-year-old granddaughter who has an answer for everything.

1. What Jewish baseball player has been known as "the Greek god of walks?" (Hint: He is currently a Yankee.)
2. What popular TV personality has pushed for changes in Passover, lamenting that in comparison to Easter, "they have chocolate bunnies, while all we have is horseradish!"?

- (Hint: He can be seen 'daily'.)
3. What is the last Hebrew word of the Kaddish?
 4. Have the number of Jews in the US House of Representatives increased, decreased, or remained the same after the 2012 election?
 5. What is the first word (conventional English translation) of the Book of Psalms?
 6. And what is the last word?
 7. Name both the director and the screenwriter of the acclaimed film *Lincoln*.
 8. What do the 3rd of Tishri, 10th of Tevet and 17th of Tammuz have in

common? (Hint: It is similar to the 9th of Av.)

9. Throughout his career, Harry Belafonte was regularly asked to sing one of two songs: the Banana Boat Song (Day-O) and...?
10. During this past month of January, our organist, Joe Bertolozzi, spent a few days in Paris, preparing to do what? (Hint: He did a similar thing in 2009.)

And don't forget to show up for the Megillah reading, Purim Spiel Spectacular, and Pasta Dinner on Saturday night, February 23rd (formal attire optional). Answers next month.

Rabbi Paul Golomb



My, how time flies! Since becoming President, I have a much better understanding of the many challenges

that we as a congregation continually face together. There are some relatively routine challenges, such as who can handle a particular temple event, while some are far greater and more important challenges to all of us. These would include recognizing the current and foreseeable economic conditions that we live in, how they affect our Temple, and what we need to do to act responsibly.

I couldn't do this job without the continued support of our Executive Committee and Board of Trustees. Each month brings new challenges, and together we have worked through all of them, arriving at the best solutions for our congregation. I especially thank Sandra Mamis, Bob Ritter, Brian Silverman, Jeff Brenner, Linda Lant, and Marge Groten, who have offered sound advice on many issues confronting the Temple over the past year.

Some of our more prominent accomplishments during the year include the Geshur Religious School program at Vassar Temple (thanks to Joel Hoffman);

President's Message

the start of a Temple archive of historical documents (thanks to Candace Lewis); various indoor and outdoor improvements such as removal of bushes, construction of a walkway in the rear of the building, and renovation of Classroom 4 (thanks to Alan Kafflowitz, Bob Ritter, Chuck Stein, Sandra Mamis, the Men's Club, and many others); the Bright Lights and Miracles Gala and the Hineni Fund (thanks to Jen Dahnert, Andi Ciminello, and their very capable committee); restarting the Youth Group (thanks to Lara Cifone, Robin Peritz, Stan Marcus, and Rachel Marcus); and many other excellent projects!

Don't forget two very wonderful and exciting events in early February: Hamantaschen Baking on Sunday February 3rd, when everyone (including the kids) gets involved in making those traditional Purim treats; and the long-awaited After Hours event on Saturday evening, February 9th, featuring tapas, beer, sangria, and live music ... which is sure to be lots of fun!

Our Adult Education series will kick off 2013 with a four-session course on *Modern Israel's Greatest Poet: The Poems of Yehuda Amichai*, with Rabbi Golomb, to be started on February 14th and 21st.

Also, don't miss our annual Purim Spiel, the *Wizard of Schnoz*, directed by

Art Menken, and the annual Pasta Dinner hosted by the Men's Club, both on February 23rd.

One of the things we strive to do is host meaningful programming to help maintain the strength of our Vassar Temple community. Help us ... don't distance yourself from the congregation. More importantly, reach out to a friend or a recent acquaintance and invite them to join you in some activity. The result will be enriching for both of you!

L'Shalom,

Bob Abrams

Purim-continued from page 1

You are sure to laugh at the dialogue, be amazed at the costumes and special effects created by our congregants, and be impressed by the acting of talented temple members of all ages.

The evening will conclude with the sharing of hamantaschen and other goodies. Adults as well as children are encouraged to come in costume. Don't forget to bring a box of Purim Pasta to shake during the Megillah reading whenever Haman's name is mentioned! (See article on page 7 about Purim Pasta.)

Worship Services

Friday, February 1

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service

Saturday, February 2

9:00 a.m. Torah Study

10:00 p.m. New Paths Service

Friday, February 8

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

Saturday, February 9

9:00 a.m. Torah Study

10:00 a.m. Morning Service

Friday, February 15

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

Saturday, February 16

9:00 a.m. Torah Study

10:00 a.m. New Paths Service

Friday, February 22

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service

Saturday, February 23

9:00 a.m. Torah Study

7:00 p.m. Megillah Reading, Purim Spiel
Costume Parade & Hamantaschen Eating!
Come and Enjoy!

Friday, March 1

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service/Dinner in Social Hall

Saturday, March 2

9:00 a.m. Torah Study

10:00 a.m. New Paths Service

Scriptural Readings

February 1 & 2 *Yitro*

Exodus Chap. 20

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

February 8 & 9 *Mishpatim Shabbat Shekalim*

Exodus 23:20-24:18

Haftarah: II Kings 12:1-17

February 15 & 16 *T'rumah*

Exodus 26:31-27:19

Haftarah: I Kings 5:26-6:13

February 22 & 23 *Titzaveh Shabbat Zakhor*

Exodus 29:19-30:10

Haftarah: I Samuel 15:3-34

March 1 & 2 *Ki Tissa Shabbat Parah*

Exodus 33:12-34:35

Haftarah: Ezekiel 36:16-38

New Paths Services

Please join us in the sun-lit East Chapel on Saturdays, February 2nd and 16th 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.

“To the Best of My Abilities: A Panel of Elected Officials” after Shabbat Services on Saturday Morning, February 9th

Several members of our Jewish community have or had the honor and responsibility of serving their fellow citizens as elected officials. After our Shabbat morning Torah service on Saturday, February 9th, four current or past holders of elective office will reflect on the challenge of reconciling the demands of one's constituents, the pressures from one's political party leaders, and one's own personal philosophy. The speakers will be New York State Assembly Member Didi Barrett, former City of Poughkeepsie Mayor Sheila Newman, Poughkeepsie City Council Member Mary Solomon, and former New York State Assembly Member Joel Miller.

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 be treated to our panelists' presentation, and at noon we will enjoy a kiddush lunch together. Plan to join us!

“Modern Israel's Greatest Poet: The Poems of Yehuda Amichai” with Rabbi Golomb

A four-session adult education course given by Rabbi Golomb at temple this winter will examine the poetry of Yehuda Amichai. The classes will be held on Thursdays, February 14th and 21st and March 14th and 21st, at 7:00 p.m.

Yehuda Amichai (1924-2000) was an outstanding representative of the second generation of Hebrew poets. Born in Germany, he came to Palestine with his family in 1936 and fought in Israel's War of Independence. Many of his poems have been translated into English (and dozens of other languages). The course participants will discuss selections from Amichai's work, dealing with such issues as Jews, Judaism, Israel as land and nation, war, peace, and love.

The course is open to the community free of charge, and participants may attend as many sessions as they wish. For more information, call 845-454-2570 or email rabbi@vassartemple.org.

Attend the Second Annual First-Night Seder at Temple on March 25th

A first-night Passover Seder, organized and led by members of the congregation, will be held in the temple social hall on Friday evening, March 25th, beginning at 5:30 p.m.

The short seder service will be engaging, interactive, and fun, appealing to both adults and children. The evening will continue with a delicious four-course dinner, including the traditional ritual foods.

This Vassar Temple event is open to temple members, family and friends and is priced just to cover anticipated costs. The cost for each adult is \$30 and for each child aged 5 to 13 is \$10, with no cost for children under 5 and a maximum per family of \$70.

It is essential that you make your reservation by March 6th to allow for all the preparations that need to be made. Reservations must be accompanied by payment and selection of an entrée (Rotisserie Chicken or Boneless Fish Filet in

a delicate lemon sauce) for each person. To reserve your place(s), contact Alan Kaffowitz at alankaffowitz@yahoo.com or 229-1432. Checks should be mailed before March 6th to the Temple, 140 Hooker Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601, with the word "Seder" on the memo line and the number of adults and children attending.

This promises to be a wonderful way to begin your Passover celebration, as it was last year. If you have questions, contact Sandra Mamis, Seder Event Chair, at seder@vassartemple.org or 914-456-3524.

RAC Consultation on Conscience in Washington in April

The Religious Action Center's Consultation on Conscience, will be held April 21-23 in Washington, DC. As the flagship social justice program of the Reform Movement, Consultation on Conscience convenes Jewish leaders, activists, and temple members for three days of learning and discussion with key stakeholders and decision-makers in the American political system. There are always exciting nationally known speakers on issues crucial to us all.

Early Bird registration is available: register before March 22 and the cost is only \$259 (not including transportation or overnight accommodations) with the discount code EARLY2013. Financial assistance may also be available through Rabbi Golomb.

You can learn more about the Consultation on Conscience, view highlights of past programs, and register at www.rac.org/consultation. If you are interested in attending, please contact our Social Action Chairman, Marian Schwartz at socialaction@vassartemple.org or 845-849-0025.

"Shabbat Across America: Light, Candles, Action" ~ Reserve by February 25th for Dinner and Service on March 1st

On Friday, March 1st at 6:00 p.m. we will join hundreds of synagogues across the continent in observing "Shabbat Across America" to celebrate what unifies all Jews — Shabbat! Everyone is invited to our social hall – singles, couples, families, people of all ages – to be part of "Shabbat Around the Table," an experience combining Shabbat dinner, spirited worship, and joyful song. A complete family-friendly dairy/vegetarian dinner will be provided. There will NOT be a separate service in the sanctuary on March 1st but if you arrive

at 7:00 p.m., you will be in time for the end of the service, including the mourner's Kaddish, and a festive Oneg Shabbat.

The cost of the dinner for temple members is \$10 per adult and \$5 per child aged 5-12; no charge for children under 5. Members are encouraged to bring interested friends; non-member guests of the temple are invited at no charge.

Reservations for both members and non-members MUST be received by Friday, February 25th by contacting Wendy Marcus at 226-2502 or masinc223@aol.com

and telling her the number of adults and children you are bringing. Checks made out to Vassar Temple Sisterhood should be mailed to 140 Hooker Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 with "March 1 dinner" on the memo line.

Tiny Temple Helps Bake Hamantashen



All preschoolers (age infant-5) and those who are raising them are invited to join in the fun at Tiny Temple on Sunday, February 3rd (snow date: February 10th) from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. to learn about the joyous holiday of Purim by helping to bake hamantaschen – and tasting the results! 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 tinytemple@vassartemple.org.

Wheelchairs and Shower Chairs Needed

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

Your Help and Food Donations Needed for February 3rd Lunch Box

The February 3rd Lunch Box at the Family Partnership Center will be sponsored by our Men's Club. You can join them in this *mitzvah* by bringing 3 lbs. of ground beef or ground turkey browned with ½ cup of onions, 3 lbs. of cooked rotini pasta (lightly oiled), or a dozen pieces of fruit (bananas, oranges, and green grapes are especially popular) to the temple by Friday, February 1st. If you leave the food in the temple refrigerator, be sure it is clearly marked with your name and "Lunch Box 2/3." You can also have fun (and get community service credit) by helping at the Lunch Box that Sunday from 11:30 to 2:00.

If you can donate food or help cook and serve, please let Dave Wolf know right away by calling him at 229-8038 or emailing mensclub@vassartemple.org.

In Remembrance

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

Mort Hollinger, father of Nancy Samson

If You Want to Help Plan the Second Annual Vassar Temple Seder...

...come to the second planning meeting in the temple library on Sunday morning, February 17th at 10:30 a.m. If you want to be involved but can't attend that morning, contact Sandra Mamis at 914-456-3524 or seder@vassartemple.org.

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 1 In memory of Ronah Gordon Posner donated by Joan & David Posner.
- February 8 In memory of Evelyn Slote Kahn donated by Muriel & Matt Lampell.
- February 15 In memory of Dr. Irma Koltai donated by Cathy & Gabe Bokor.
- February 22 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 March bulletin must be submitted to the temple office by February 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.

Gala Gratitude

By all measures, the 2012 Gala was a great success, but it is an accomplishment that would not have happened without the dedication and hard work of many people in our Temple Community. We are grateful to all of you who stepped up, without hesitation, to contribute your time, energy and resources to the project. It was a magical evening that truly reminded us of the very special people who make our community the remarkable one that it is.

The ultimate result of the Gala, in addition to a strengthened sense of community, was a total of \$145,000 raised in outright gifts and pledges to support the Seth A. Erlebacher Religious School. A portion of the proceeds will support the operating budget this year and next, and the balance will be maintained as the Hineni Fund, to provide long-term operating support for the Religious School. The fund will be dispersed at the discretion of the Finance Committee, but because it is a long-term fund, additions may be made at any time to keep it robust.

As a long-term fund, the Hineni Fund can be enhanced by congregants through testamentary gifts (estate provisions), similar to other restricted funds at the Temple such as the Vassar Temple Endowment Fund and the Sustaining Fund. Some congregants have already chosen to support the Hineni Fund in this way. While we hope it will be a very long time before these arrangements are realized, it is a wonderful gesture of future support. If you would like more information about making a bequest provision for the Hineni Fund, please contact Brian Silverman at briansilverman@aol.com.

We also want to recognize and thank those whose efforts created the Gala and the Hineni Fund. Thanks go out to:

Melissa Erlebacher, Lou Lewis and Carol and Art Menken for your willingness to step forward and take part in the honorific portion of the evening

Honorary co-chairs Richard Friedland and Janice Weinstein-Friedland for being among the first to get involved

Marilyn McCaulley, Judy Creedon and Lisa Rubinstein for creating a magnificent event

Suzi Stoller and Laura Brundage for making everything look so beautiful

Laura Brundage for leading the ad book effort

Marianne Abrams for contributing countless hours on every piece of printed material associated with the Gala and the Hineni Fund

Doi Cohen and Susan Hecht for your eloquent words and amazing press coverage

Marsha Lowry and Brian Silverman for diligent accounting and reporting (and Richard Lowry for help behind the scenes in that effort)

Lisa-Sue Quackenbush for being with us in spirit even as she was recovering from surgery

Muriel and Matt Lampell and Elaine Lipschutz for being the most reliable team of worker bees we could have ever hoped to have

David Lampell and Sandor Margolin for all manner of technical support, and Sandor for running the sound system at the Gala

The Arlington High School musicians and Adam Ciminello & Company for wonderful music that created the perfect atmosphere for the evening

Herb Stoller and Sam Dahnert for a wonderful video

Perla Kaufman for sage advice and guidance, for being a champion for this event, and being the most perfect emcee

Thanks also to the Finance Committee, the Board, Rabbi Golomb, Dr. Joel Hoffman, and all those who helped guide and advise us in ways large and small throughout the planning.

And of course, our heartfelt thanks to everyone who attended the event and/or purchased ads, as well as those who stepped up as sponsors for the event. We would like to take this final opportunity to recognize the Gala/Hineni Fund sponsors; see the list on page 13.

Thank you again for saying, "HINENI!"

Andi Ciminello and Jen Dahnert

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.

Helpful Tip

To reduce the chance of a mixup in the coat room, put a business card (or a card with your name and contact information on it) in one of the pockets of your coat.

Interfaith Story Concert on February 10th

The annual Peace Story Concert sponsored by the Dutchess County Interfaith Council will be held this year on Sunday, February 10th from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 67 South Randolph Avenue, Poughkeepsie. Story tellers Jack Maguire, Karen Pillsworth, Emily Dunuwila, Ron Sopyla, Muriel Horowitz and Lorraine Hartin-Geardi will celebrate the life of beloved local story teller Mary Summerlin who passed away recently.

Book Club to Discuss “The Midwife of Venice” on February 20th

Vassar Temple Sisterhood’s Book Club will discuss “The Midwife of Venice” by Roberta Rich, a historical novel focusing on the complex lives of women centuries ago, on Wednesday, February 20th at 2:00 p.m. in the Community Room of Collegeview Tower, 141 Fulton Ave., Poughkeepsie.

Hannah Levi is renowned throughout Venice for her skills as a midwife but when a nobleman implores her to attend the difficult labor of his wife, Hannah is torn. A Papal edict forbids Jews from giving medical care to Christians, but the payment being offered is enough to ransom her beloved husband Isaac who has been captured at sea. Hannah’s choice

entangles her in a treacherous family rivalry in this suspenseful story of love and intrigue. The book is available in paperback or through the local library system.

Muriel Lampell will lead the discussion, to which everyone is welcome. To RSVP or get more information, contact Doi Cohen at 462-6193 or dcohen1230@gmail.com.

Meditation Group Meets on February 5th

The meditation group led by Linda Cantor and Ed Rosenberg will hold its next monthly meeting on Tuesday, February 5th 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 (first Tuesday of each month) by contacting the temple office, 454-2570 or office@vassartemple.org.

BAKERS NEEDED!

Please join us for Sisterhood’s annual
HAMANTASCHEN BAKING DAY



Make friends while making hamantaschen for our Purim service and delivery to home-bound congregants and out-of-town college students.

Sunday, February 3rd
(snow date: 2/10/13)

9:00 to 1:00 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 the temple office – and a rolling pin.
Remaining ingredients provided.

Don’t Forget Your Purim Pasta on February 23rd

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 7:00 p.m. service on Saturday, February 23rd the boxes will be collected and delivered to a local food pantry.

Macaroni, ziti, bowties - any will do! Get ready to shake them in the spirit of *Shalach Manot*. The opportunity to fight hunger is just boxes away!

Nancy Samson
Social Action Committee

Help Needed with New Temple Website

Because Richard Lowry, who has created and maintained the Vassar Temple website that we are all proud of, will be moving to Connecticut in the next few months, we need to set up a new website that does not require knowledge of HTML to create and maintain. Fortunately, the URJ (Union for Reform Judaism) offers its 900 member congregations a platform with five different formats on which to base their websites. A group of temple members has begun to look into the options and decide which features from our current website we should keep, etc.

No web expertise is required to participate. We are especially seeking members who can develop and update appealing descriptions of Temple functions. If you would like to be part of this project going forward, your views and assistance will be greatly appreciated. For more information, or to express your interest, contact Bob Abrams at president@vassartemple.org.



From the Religious School Director



“My God, the soul that you have given me is a pure one.”

That line appears in the daily morning service, as if --- as Debbie Friedman used

to teach --- reminding us that each day we start anew, untainted by whatever we may have done the day before. Debbie used to add that if our religious schools could teach the students that they start each day with a pure soul, we'd be ahead of the game even if we taught nothing else. I tend to agree.

I have frequently asked teenage students if they think that they have a pure soul, and the most common answer saddens me: “I used to,” they say.

Yes, even by high school, sometimes earlier, the students think they have done something so awful that they have irrevocably destroyed who they used to be.

Certainly part of the problem is the Christian but entirely un-Jewish approach that equates sex with impurity. (I remem-

ber teaching a high-school class about *Lecha Dodi* some years ago, and pointing out that the word we usually translate as “my beloved” is, in fact, “my lover.” A surprised student asked, “so the prayer is dirty?” “It’s sexual,” I told her, “not dirty.” That was a good day for her.) But I think the problem goes deeper.

I think that even the most forgiving among us are often relentlessly unforgiving of ourselves. We let other people have a bad day and don’t give ourselves the same permission. We accept lapses in judgment by others but not ourselves. We forget about callous remarks aimed our way while we let our own misspoken words haunt us. We want to take back what we have done or said, and when we cannot, we feel we have sullied our soul.

Some mistakes are so monumental that we read about them in the newspaper and hear about them in courts of law. But most of us let far more mundane errors haunt us: an ill-advised comment, a road not taken, or a choice poorly chosen.

I think there’s a certain nobility to trying to live a blameless life, but an equally

certain futility. We want to ask, “Can I be perfect?” But the better question seems to be, “How do I react when I screw up?” Our morning prayer addresses that second question. The prayer’s answer is that no matter what, we are still the very embodiment of holy purity. There is nothing we can do, say, or believe that can destroy the inner beauty of the human soul.

I want to be clear. I don’t know what a soul is, and I’m not sure I believe in a God that can give me a pure one. But I don’t think we should let the lofty language of the liturgy hide an important message for our daily life.

I write this in the first few days of 2013, when many people are engaging with New Year’s Resolutions: I won’t do... I will do...I’ll never again... I promise not to... And so forth. But I think most of us have unfinished business from last year, last month, and even yesterday.

Maybe an appropriate resolution for moving forward is to start each day by reminding ourselves that the soul you have given me, my God, is a pure one.

Dr. Joel M. Hoffman

Comparative Religion: Interfaith Interview at Beth-El

As part of a series of discussions between Rabbi Neal Loevinger and faith leaders from around the Hudson Valley, Rev. Gregory S. Patsis of the Kimisis Greek Orthodox Church will be interviewed on Thursday, February 7th at 7:00 p.m. at Temple Beth-El, 118 South Grand Avenue.

The community is welcome free of charge. For more information, call 454-0570 or go to

www.templebethelpokny.org.

January Lunch Box Thanks

I’d like to thank the following families for helping in either supplying food and/or serving at the Sisterhood Lunch Box on Sunday, January 6th. It was truly a very successful event. Babas, Brenner, Brundage, Cantor, Ciminello, Cochran, Cohen, Collins, Dahnert, DuVall, Erlebacher, Frankel, Garber, Greller, Lipschutz, Mamis, Marcus, Margolin, Oclatis, Quackenbush, Ritter, Rosenfeld, Schwartz and any other family that I may have forgotten.

Lisa-Sue Quackenbush

JWV Schedules February Meeting

The Jewish War Veterans, Post 625, will hold its monthly meeting on February 3, 2013 in the Bingo Room at Congregation Schomre Israel on Park Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY. Although you cannot see Congregation Schomre Israel from the JCC, it is just north of the rear of the JCC on Park Avenue. It also has an entrance on College Avenue.

The meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m. As Schomre Israel is strictly Kosher, no food or drink may be brought into the synagogue. The only exception is that Dunkin Donuts coffee may be brought in.

In the event of inclement weather, announcements will be on Cumulus Radio: 101.5 WPDH, 1490 WKNY, 92.7/96.9 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.

Make Your Half-Shekel Count

Three years ago, Jewish Family Services of Dutchess County established the Emergency Fund for Jewish Families. The Emergency Fund assists members of the local Jewish community who are facing a financial crisis by providing them grants to cover urgent expenses. Recipients often are families struggling with long-term unemployment or illness, unable to pay for an essential item such as medicine, food, a mortgage or utility payment, child care costs, or health insurance. For these local Jewish families, the Emergency Fund is the only place they have to turn to at their time of desperate need. This Fund is a vital community resource supported solely by donations from members of the local Jewish community.

Traditionally, on behalf of one's self and one's children, just before Purim a Jew gave three coins to aid those in need. This was done in remembrance of the

half-shekel that was donated at the Temple in ancient times. As Purim approaches, in the spirit of this tradition we invite you to donate your "half shekel" to the Emergency Fund for Jewish Families during the month of February. In doing so, members of Vassar Temple will be joining members of other area synagogues in this important annual fundraising drive. Many choose to donate \$18 (*chai*); however donations of any amount, great or small, are welcomed and very much appreciated.

You can make a contribution from your family to help another family by writing a check to Jewish Family Services of Dutchess County, with the notation "Emergency Fund" on the memo line, and mailing it to JFS, 110 South Grand Ave., Poughkeepsie, NY 12603. If you prefer, your check may be made out to Vassar Temple with "JFSEF" on the memo line and brought or sent to the Temple. To

donate online, go to the Jewish Federation website www.jewishdutchess.org and click on the JFS Emergency Fund for Jewish Families link. E-cards can be sent for donations made in honor or memory of a loved one. ***All donations to JFS are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.***

Applications for assistance from the Emergency Fund for Jewish Families can be obtained by calling Linda Tafapolsky, Psy.D., Director of Jewish Family Services of Dutchess County, at 845-471-9817, or by sending a confidential email to jfs@jewishdutchess.org. The EFJF provides honor loans and grants of up to \$800 per recipient.

Vassar Temple and Temple Beth-El to Hold Joint Shabbaton, March 15-16

This year the annual Joint Shabbaton sponsored by Vassar Temple and Temple Beth-El will take place during the weekend of March 15-16. The guest speaker for the Shabbaton will be Rabbi Mychal Springer who is the director of the Center for Pastoral Education at The Jewish Theological Seminary.

The Shabbaton will begin with a joint Shabbat service at Vassar Temple on Friday, March 15th at 7:30 p.m. during which Rabbi Springer will speak about "Prayer and Healing: Is Anyone Listening?"

Rabbi Springer will offer a *d'var Torah* during the 10:00 a.m. joint Shabbat morning service at Temple Beth-El on Saturday, March 16th. The service will be followed by a Kiddush Luncheon and a discussion of the topic "Vulnerability as a Path to God" led by Rabbi Springer.

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; mark your calendar now!

Shopping with Gift Cards from Vassar Temple:

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What else is there to say?

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Need more information on how to get started?

Contact the SCRIP Coordinator:

Sandra Mamis [914-456-4524; scrip@vassartemple.org]



Message Sent to Congregation in Newtown, CT

Three days after the December 14th tragedy in Newtown, our temple president, Bob Abrams, sent the following message to Andrew Paley, the president of Congregation Adath Israel in Newtown, CT (<http://www.congadathisrael.org/>), to which the family of one of the children, Noah Pozner, belongs. Their web site indicates two charities for those who wish to assist all of the families of the victims of the massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School: newtown.uwwesternct.org or www.everribbon.com.

Dear Andrew,

At Vassar Temple, a Jewish congregation in Poughkeepsie NY, some 50 miles from Newtown, we are very saddened by the senseless, horrific tragedy that occurred on Friday. Our hearts go out to everyone in your community and the families directly affected, including Noah Pozner's family.

I am sure that you have received offers of support from synagogues throughout the U.S. and I would like to offer our help. If there's anything I, or we as a congregation can do to help, please do not hesitate to contact me.

We recently embarked on an initiative to help our families deal with issues related to bereavement. As a result, we have an online document that is available to anyone wishing to see it. Go to www.vassartemple.org and click on the left side link, "Online Bereavement Guide".

Our sincere sympathy is extended to Noah's family on behalf of our entire congregation.

Zichronam L'Vracha, may their memories be a blessing.

*Bob Abrams
President, Vassar Temple, Poughkeepsie NY
Vassar Temple Officers and Board of Trustees*

Souper Sale Delivery by a "Souper Team"

The Social Action Committee's annual Souper Sale brought in extraordinary financial donations by so many generous members and friends, enabling us to purchase 838 cans of nutritious, delicious chunky soups with Vassar Temple Scrip. Our "souper" volunteer drivers delivered the cases of soup on January 10th to area food pantries and senior housing projects including Dutchess Outreach; Community Action Partnership for their pantries in Poughkeepsie, Beacon, Dover and Red Hook; St. Paul's Episcopal Church food pantry; Full Gospel Center Love Reaches Out Pantry in LaGrangeville; and Interfaith Senior Towers in Poughkeepsie. Special thanks go to Sandi Rugar for all her help with the bookkeeping, to the staff and management at Stop & Shop for their assistance and generosity, and to the volunteers pictured, including our photographer Perla Kaufman.



Back, left to right: Jim Robinowitz, Nancy Samson, Jon Ollendorf, Tracy Marcus, Joel Kelson, Gil Seligman, Ralph and Marian Schwartz.

Front: Dave Samson



2012 Hanukkah Celebration at Vassar Temple.

On December 14 members and guests of all ages enjoyed a pot luck supper with latkes in the social hall followed by a beautiful candle-lighting service in the darkened sanctuary. As these photos, and the many others in the Photo Gallery on our website, show, they enjoyed each other's company too!



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Michael Sommerfield
Augusta Wurtzel
Reba Gold
Jane Kramer
Joseph Moselle
Aaron Estrin

February 8

Jeanette Bergman
Arlene Mates
Martha Held
Dorothy Parish
Dr. M. Alden Weingart
Evelyn Slote Kahn
Leo Livingston
Leona Lowry Engel
Hon. Henry Morgenthau
Lillian Geber
Dr. Lawrence Schuyler
Dr. Samuel Levitch
Sabina Jacobs
Mary Hyman
Evelyn Brown
Samuel Warshaw
Leon Alpers
Reuben Wiseman
Timothy Creedon
Harold Robinowitz
Armand H. Newman
Owen J. Sacks
Joseph Drobner
Benjamin Uttal
Gary M. Zimmer

February 15

Herman Kraut
Lillian Feldman
Evelyn Bersak
William Hyman
Jules H. Lippmann
Lawrence Edell
Sidney I. Love
Jarrod Harrington
Blanche Fertig
Jacob Greenberg
Mary R. Scheer
Freda Reifler
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Wendy E. Newman
Dr. Michael Ettenson
Stanley Soirefman
Harry Lashinsky
Celia Frank
Morris Levine

February 22

David Haber
Milton Rauh
Robert Joseph
Ida Baskin Schwartz
David Stephen Satz
Augusta Steinman
George Laks
Stanton Lipschutz
Stuart Alpers
Esther Frances Goldberg
Jack Frankel
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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.

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Organist:	Joseph Bertolozzi
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Immediate Past President:	Sandra Mamis
Youth Group President:	Rachel Marcus



February 2013 Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 March Bulletin deadline CAN JAM Weekend 6pm Shabbat Service	2 9am Torah Study 10am New Paths
3 9am-12pm RS K-7 9am Hamantaschen Baking 10:30am Tiny Temple 11:30am Lunch Box	4 7:15pm Ritual	5 10am SEP 7:30pm Meditation	6 6:30-8:30pm RS 8-12	7 10am SEP 11:30am Talmud	8 Flyers Deadline 6pm Shabbat Service Birthday Blessings	9 9am Torah Study 10am Morning Service & Program 7:30pm Vassar After Hours
10 9am-12pm RS K-7 9am Hamantaschen Baking (snow day)	11	12 10am SEP	13 6:30-8:30pm RS 8-12	14 10am SEP 11:30am Talmud 7pm Adult Ed—Amichai	15 6pm Shabbat Torah Service	16 9am Torah 10am New Paths
17 NO RS	18 PRESIDENT'S DAY	19 10am SEP	20 6:30-8:30pm RS 8-12 2pm VTS Book Club	21 10am SEP 11:30am Talmud 7pm Adult Ed—Amichai	22 6pm Shabbat Service	23 9am Torah Study 5:45pm Pasta Dinner 7pm Purim Spiel and Megillah Reading
24 PURIM 9am-12pm RS K-7 Purim Carnival @ JCC	25 7pm Board Meeting	26 10am SEP	27 6:30-8:30pm RS 8-12	28 10am SEP 11:30am Talmud		