



THE HOLIDAY OF THE TREES

"Tu b'shevat higah! Chag la-ilanot"

Tu b'shevat has arrived. It is the holiday of the trees.

It's true! We are getting ready to celebrate the trees. As we walk the streets of Manhattan, or make our way through Central Park bundled in layers to protect us from the cold, we can see many different kinds of trees. At this point in the year it is difficult to think about celebrating the life of trees. They all look so cold. Without leaves, they appear lifeless and yet they are absolutely the reason we have life today. As we all know, trees give off oxygen which enables us to take in each and every breath. In a very profound way, trees are OUR SUSTAINER OF LIFE.

So, even though it is the middle of winter and many of us are anxiously awaiting the time when we can once again walk the streets without a coat or gloves, we must use this very precious time to honor that which gives us life – the trees!

But what can we do?

We actually do a lot to honor the trees throughout the entire year. Every time we use recycled paper in our computer printers, carry our groceries in a canvas bag and send an email instead of a hard copy in the mail, we are ensuring the continued survival of trees (and ultimately our own survival).

We can also make a commitment to plant trees, here in the United States as well as in Israel. This is a wonderful way to honor the trees as well as the important people in our lives.

Trees are a wonderful representation of strength and determination. Their roots extend twice their height deep into the ground enabling them to withstand tremendous struggle and conflict. Their branches twist and turn in all directions reminding us of what a real life's journey looks like. Their leaves provide shelter and many bear fruit for us to eat. Trees are so important within Judaism that the Torah is also called

"eitz chayim," a tree of life. We bring the Torah to life by **LIVING** what we learn.

Tu b'shevat marks the time for us to celebrate all the gifts we receive from trees. It is also a wonderful time for us to reflect on our roots, branches and leaves. Is the way I live my life anchoring me firmly enough so I can be the person I want/need to be? Are the twists and turns in my life taking me where I want to go? Are my branches strong enough and my leaves full enough to provide for others?

We are currently reading from the book of *Shemot*, Exodus, and we are in a season of great reflection as we explore the journey of the Israelites from slavery to freedom. Between *Tu B'shevat* and our Passover seder we have the privilege/obligation/opportunity to think about our own enslavement. Here are some questions to help us as we move through this time:

What constricts me? What are my idols? What can I do to break free from my own oppression? When am I like Pharaoh? What can I do to ensure my own freedom and the freedom of others? How can I make sure I am sustaining my own life with integrity and strength and how can I be a sustainer of life for others?

As we walk the streets of Manhattan let us take time to look closely at all of the trees along our path. I invite you to honor each tree by offering the simple blessing of "Thank you God for the gift of this tree."

Mekor ha'chayim, Source of life, may we also have the courage and the strength to seriously reflect on what we need to do in order to strengthen our roots, be mindful of our branches and use our leaves to protect and sustain others.

L'shalom,

Rabbi LP

Congregation Habonim Annual Blood Drive Donors Needed

Date: Sunday, March 8
Place: West End Synagogue
190 Amsterdam Avenue (68th Street)

Time: 10am to 3pm
Contact: Joel Bloom (212) 245-8070
jbloomesq@verizon.net

Sponsored by the New York Blood Center
in cooperation with Congregation Habonim and West End Synagogue

ALL BLOOD TYPES NEEDED

Please contact Joel Bloom to schedule an appointment

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

CONGREGATION HABONIM

44 West 66th Street
New York, NY 10023
(Between Columbus Ave. & Central Park West)
Phone: 212/787-5347 Fax: 212/595-3542
Email: office@habonim.net
http://www.habonim.net

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THE
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CONSERVATIVE
JUDAISM

Congregation Habonim
is a member of the
United Synagogue of
Conservative Judaism.

THANK YOU FROM EVA BERGMANN

To all my dear friends_

Many thanks for the donations you made in my honor and for having shared the dinner at the Women's League with me.

— Eva Bergmann

EVA BERGMANN HONORED

Sisterhood is very proud of our Board member, Eva Bergmann, who was honored by the Metropolitan Area of Women's League for Conservative Judaism at their annual Torah Fund dinner, held on Thursday, December 4th, 2008 at the Sutton Place Synagogue. Eva received the League's Lev v'Nefesh award for her long service to the Habonim community.

Eva was recognized for being the "heart and soul" of Habonim. She knows everyone in the congregation from the oldest to the youngest and they are all always in her thoughts. In her role as Corresponding Secretary for Sisterhood, Eva has for years written to congregants on every occasion – happy and sad. Eva's early life was marked by tragedy and yet she is remarkably positive in her outlook on life. She has truly been an inspiration to our community, and is absolutely deserving of this honor.

Women's League for Conservative Judaism is the umbrella organization for Sisterhoods. With a worldwide membership of over 100,000 women, WLCJ is the voice of the women of the Conservative Movement.

Torah Fund is the official act of tzedakah of Women's League for Conservative Judaism. Torah Fund is an annual grass-roots campaign that raises over \$2 million each year, mostly through modest contributions, to support the students and programs of The Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies at the American Jewish University in Los Angeles and the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem.

Sisterhood wishes to acknowledge and thank the following members of the Habonim community who joined us at the celebration and/or made contributions to Torah Fund in Eva's honor:

Elizabeth Bernhardt	Barbara Lissner
Hilda Bondi	Reggie Mayer
Graciela Broitman	Ruth Mayer
Wendy Cohen	Ellen Mendel
Fran DeLott	Jillian Neubauer
Marianne Falkenstein	Vivien and Bob Newman
Barbara Feldberg	Judith Page
Linda Goldstein	Yolanda Potasinski
Hella Hammelbacher	Mary Sanders
Tracy Hattem	Peggy Sarlin
Ruth Heiman	Ellie Schaffer
Marilyn Horowitz	Janet Schwartz
Lila Intner	Liselotte Sperber
Amy Kargauer	Dail Stalow
Rabbi Joshua Katzan	Harriet Unis
Susan Leicher	Marga Walter
Claire Lewin	Susan Worden

— Mary Sanders

JOIN HABONIM'S SISTERHOOD AT THIS GROUND-BREAKING CONFERENCE

JEWISH WOMEN IN PRAYER

THIS IS MY PRAYER *Va'ani Tefillati*

Have you ever felt the need to pray?
Do you reach for God when you are grateful for a miracle such as
birth? when you are mourning a loss? when you or a loved one
reaches a milestone?

Learn

Network

Create

Explore the world of Jewish women's prayers
Participate in a ground-breaking inter-denominational conference
on Jewish women's prayer hosted by
Women's League for Conservative Judaism and:
The Jewish Theological Seminary
Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance
Women of Reform Judaism
Abraham Joshua Heschel School
The Jewish Community Center in Manhattan

Sunday, March 1, 2009 from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm
The Heschel High School
20 West End Avenue, at West 60th Street, Manhattan

The keynote address, which will also be the annual JTS Jack and Lewis Rudin Lecture, will be delivered by Dr. Aliza Lavie, editor of the best-selling *A Jewish Woman's Prayer Book*.

An historic panel will consist of three female spiritual leaders from Reform, Conservative and Orthodox congregations.

Presenters will include Anita Diamant, Debbie Friedman, Vanessa Ochs, Chava Weissler, and others

Cost: \$36.00 for registration and kosher lunch
For information and to register, call 212.870.1260, ext. 7165

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Yael Ben-Reuven
Alan Brown
Ehud Ben-Reuven
Louise Fay Bergman
Matthew Taub
C. Edgar Schwab
Arlene Yoskowitz
Gabriella Mitnik
Ashley Timmer
Jeremy Sokolic
Vivien Newman
Jessica Baskin
Peter Janovsky
Lynn Ladetsky
Hilda Bondi
Leonard Kauffheil
Brian King
Anna Berman
Marc Pfeffer

Michael Lissner
Lisa Mariam
Helen A. Witsenhausen
Lois Baskin
Irma Hill
Joanne Palmer
Elyse Boubli
Andrew Bergman
Evelyn Lewis-Enright
Robert L. Plancher
Nancy Aferiat
Nicole Taub
Maeda Bloomberg
Stafford Elias
Ida Messana
Yaron Minsky-Primus
Janice Roven
Andrew Sherman
Denise Wallenstein

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Renate & Stafford Elias
Barbara & Hans Wertheimer
Andrew Sherman & Joanne Palmer
Phyllis & Stanley Mishkin
Ellen & Robert Plancher
Lois Baskin & William Taubenfeld
Jason Shames & Dorit Rabbani
Ted & Sandra Dickson
Jay & Susan Paul

QUEENS COMMUNITY 2009

Shabbat Services

February 6	March 6
April 3	May 1
June 5	

Adult Learning

February 18	March 18
May 13	June 10

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ALL ARE INVITED TO HABONIM'S

OFF-SITE B'NOT MITZVAH CEREMONIES

AND SHABBAT SERVICES

All members are invited to attend the B'not Mitzvah ceremonies of Isabella Hattem and Samuel Taubenfeld. Isabella's ceremony will take place on February 21 and Samuel's will be held on April 4. In order to comfortably accommodate the large number of congregants attending, both ceremonies will be held off-site in the sanctuary at First Church of Christ, 10 West 68th Street at Central Park West.

Following services, everyone is invited to a celebratory Kiddush lunch to be held at Congregation Habonim.

Please note carefully: All children's services will take place at the regularly scheduled times at HABONIM.

See below for the schedule of events for both dates.

Saturday, February 21st at 9:30am

9:30am – Shabbat Morning Service and Bat Mitzvah of Isabella Hattem (off-site)

10:45am – Torah for Tots (led by Joan and James) and Mini-Minyan (Habonim)

12:00pm – Kiddush (Habonim)

Saturday, April 4th at 9:30am

9:30am – Shabbat Morning Service and Bar Mitzvah of Samuel Taubenfeld (off-site)

9:30am – Midreshet Habonim #5 (Habonim)

10:45am – Torah for Tots and Mini-Minyan (Habonim)

12:00pm – Kiddush (Habonim)

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS

THE HABONIM SHABBAT BEIT MIDRASH

TOPICS FOR FEBRUARY 2009

Please join us for the Shabbat Beit Midrash, in the Sanctuary following Shabbat morning services and kiddush lunch. Each week, Rabbi Katzan, Cantor Halev, guest rabbis, or members of the Habonim community teach on a wide range of topics, which are followed by lively discussion. Join us each week – or whenever your schedule allows.

FEBRUARY 7 — Cantor Bruce Halev

"The Legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. and the Jewish Community"

FEBRUARY 14 — Rabbi Lewis Warshauer

"The Bible's Favorite Non-Jewish Heroine"

FEBRUARY 21 — Rabbi Joshua Katzan

"Purim: Preparing for The Whole Megillah"

FEBRUARY 28 — Rabbi Mark Somerstein

"Biblical Poetry, Biblical Criticism and Biblical Message"

PURIM AT HABONIM

ANNUAL PURIM CARNIVAL

Sunday, March 8
2:00 – 4:00pm

MEGILLAH READING

Monday, March 9
6:00pm Family Megillah Reading
(parents and children come in costume)
7:30pm Adult Megillah Reading and Schpiel

and stay tuned for
MATZAH-PALOOZAH!

Preparing for Passover at Habonim

Join us as we prepare for this most observed holiday in the Jewish world with discussions of the spiritual dimensions of Passover, running a seder, understanding the Hagaddah, and exploring its rich musical traditions. Two sessions with brunch in between... better than a Hillel sandwich!

MARCH 29 AT 10AM

MAZEL TOV

Alissa Rivin and David Millstein on David becoming Bar Mitzvah

Janet, Paul and Brian Cord on Brian becoming Bar Mitzvah

Laurie Mendik, David, Martin & Gabriel Feuerstein on Martin becoming Bar Mitzvah

Michelle, Jonathan and Zachary Sternchos on the naming of their daughter and sister, Alexa Madison

Emily and Michael Gutter on the naming of their daughter, Sophie Ella

CONDOLENCES

Congregation Habonim extends its heartfelt condolences to:

Laura Meislin and her family on the death of her grandmother, Sarah Engle.

Ilona Chomsky and her family on the death of her father, Israel Samet.

Katherine Soll and her family on the death of her mother, Frances Forman.

Our community mourns the loss of our beloved long-time congregant, Lisa Grubel and we extend condolences to her family.

SISTERHOOD BOOK CLUB LAUNCHES WITH "PEOPLE OF THE BOOK"

On a recent January evening, Habonim Sisterhood launched its book club with a reading of Geraldine Brooks "People of the Book." This best-selling historical fiction takes on the survival of the famed Sarajevo Haggadah, a symbol of the survival of the Jewish people. Despite the chill of the weather, the session was lively, warm and informative. Due to the success of its first session, the club has already set its next date -- Wednesday, March 18 from 7:30 –9:00 PM at Habonim. Next title up is the critically-acclaimed "The Man In The White Sharkskin Suit" by Lucette M. Lagnado. (available in paperback). Everyone is welcome!

CASINO NIGHT - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2009

Enjoy a lucky night out with

D'oeuvres, Drinks & Dice

Benefit the Nursery School at Habonim!

For additional information please visit www.habonim.net or call the synagogue office.

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