

# THE TEMPLE ISRAEL NEWS

ATHOL, MASSACHUSETTS VOL. 7 NISAN - IYYAR 5763 MAY, 2003

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## RABBI'S MESSAGE ON LAG B'OMER

Lag B'omer is coming! One of our more obscure holidays, Lag B'omer is the 33rd day of the counting of the Omer. It interrupts the period of 50 days (called the Omer) between Pesach and Shavuot. In the days of Jewish persecution in Israel and in the Diaspora, the Omer was commemorated as a somber time, and many communities remembered the martyrs who were tortured and killed. There are still a few vestiges of this somber tone to these days in modern Judaism -- a ban on haircutting, and weddings are not held as a sign of mourning-- but Lag B'omer is a day that even since ancient times was observed as joyous break in the Omer. Later this month, we will observe the tradition of "getting back to nature:" on Lag B'omer by having a field day out in Warwick. Jews around the world do this as a remembrance of the time that yeshiva students hid out in the woods to study Torah and eluded Roman soldiers by "playing" at archery.

Lag B'omer exemplifies the ambivalence that Jews have with nature. Jews are the "people of the book;" few Jews I know are rugged outdoorsmen. My friend Gabe Goldman, director of the JENE Institute for Jewish Environmental Nature Educators, has been bringing Jews back to nature for more than 30 years. In fact, Gabe, who is also full member of the Turtle Clan of the Micmac of Maine, has just returned from a Passover canoe trip the Canyonlands in Utah where he baked matza and led a seder at an ancient Anastazi Indian site.

Gabe reports that there are far more opportunities for wilderness exploration with a Jewish flavor than one might imagine. Trips abound this summer in incredible places. Among the sponsors of such trips are Mosaic Outdoor Clubs of America, Kosher Expeditions, The Shalom Nature Center and Endangered Spirit. Gabe founded JENE last year with an interest in offering a balance between the wilderness experience and Jewish study.

Mosaic Outdoor Clubs of America [www.mosaics.org](http://www.mosaics.org) - conducted its first wilderness canoe trip last year with a 5-day trip on the Colorado River. They are now planning a weekend hiking trip through the Shawnee National Forest in

Southern Illinois. Kosher Expeditions [www.kosherexpeditions.com](http://www.kosherexpeditions.com), located in Atlanta, GA offers all levels of Jewish wilderness trips with all levels of kosher options. They offer trips ranging from the Amazon to Alaska and any place worthwhile in North America. These are great trips with highly qualified guides and excellent planning/preparation. Recently they ran a kosher trip to the top of Mt. Kilamangaro with a complete kosher kitchen and mashgiach (kosher authority and supervisor). Gabe is very impressed with the director of Endangered Spirit ([www.endangeredspirit.com](http://www.endangeredspirit.com)) and his commitment to providing high quality wilderness trips. They offer a variety of trips including a backpacking trip into the Colorado Rockies.

The Shalom Nature Center is located in Malibu, CA and is part of the Shalom Institute and Conference Center. The Director is a close friend of Gabe's and has canoed wilderness rivers with him in Maine and Utah, hiked the 13,500-foot high wilderness of the Wind River Range in Wyoming, and trekked across the desert of Anza Borrego. The Shalom Nature Center specializes in trips to the west ranging from southern California to northern Washington State and out to Wyoming.

These are the Jewish wilderness organizations that Gabe recommends but you should also explore [www.mannaoutdoor.org](http://www.mannaoutdoor.org) for more information on other trips with a Jewish flavor. Some of these trips are geared to singles; others are appropriate for families and older adults. Let me know if you want more information and I can put you in touch with Gabe or set you up with a Jewish wilderness adventure.

In the meantime, come join us in Warwick for Lag B'omer on May 18th.

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## SHABBAT SERVICES AND LAG B'OMER FESTIVITIES HIGHLIGHT TEMPLE ISRAEL ACTIVITIES IN MAY

Another **Shabbaton**—and yet another opportunity to enjoy Shabbat as a community--comes on the evening of **Friday, May 2 and on Saturday, May 3.** On Friday evening, we will have a “dairy-vegetarian” potluck dinner at 6:00, followed by a Shabbat service at 7:00 and a delicious Oneg after the service at 8:00. Please give a call to Emily Koester, Dinner Coordinator, at 978-544-3135 to give us an idea of what you plan to bring for the potluck dinner. We are usually particularly in need of main dishes.

Then, on Saturday morning, we have meditation with Dr. Maron, beginning at 9:15. The Shabbat service itself will be from 10:00 to 12:00 with a special lunch at noon.



**NOTE: Child care for the little ones will be available from 9:15 until lunchtime.**

The afternoon will be filled with learning and fellowship. You may join us in singing or learning some traditional Shabbat songs, if you like. We will conclude with some lovely poetry reading and discussion at 8:00 p.m. and then a beautiful Ma'ariv/Havdalah service, beginning at approximately 8:30 P.M.

**Rabbi Perlman notes that the theme for this month's Shabbaton Iyyar is “Israel at 55.”**

### Friday night

Sermon: "Is Israel part of God's plan?"

### Saturday morning

Discussion: "Love your neighbor more than yourself or Love your neighbor as yourself?"

### Lunch roundtable:

"The commandment of Love Your Neighbor in the perspective of Israel and the Palestinians"

### Saturday evening

Poetry study: "Yehudah Amichai's Israel"

Please accept our warm invitation to attend any or all of the components of this wonderful Shabbat.

**Note: There will be a Board of Directors meeting on Sunday morning, May 3 from 9:00 – 10:30 a.m. at Dr. Maron's home at 32 North Main Street in Petersham. If you have any questions or need directions, please call Myron at 978-724-0238. We hope that all board members can attend.**

**LAG B'OMER CELEBRATION WITH THE TWO TEMPLE ISRAEL'S TO OCCUR IN WARWICK ON MAY 18!**

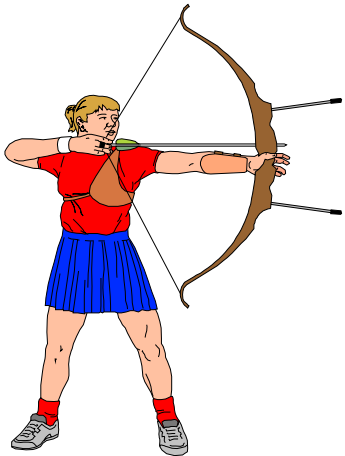
Lag B'Omer is a fun-filled event full of field games, tug o' war, archery, and a bonfire. Come

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to the country home of Reva Reck and Tom Wyatt, members of Temple Israel in Greenfield, for a joint celebration of this annual springtime holiday! Festivities are scheduled to begin at 10 am, and end by 12:30 on Sunday, May 18th. There will be bow & arrow making for the children, along with a demonstration from a professional archer, and a torah study related to the holiday for the adults. We may even have the opportunity to get our hair cut, as this is the

traditional time for little boys to get their first haircut. The event will be a non-dairy (fleshig) potluck--Greenfield's Temple Israel will provide the kosher hotdogs. Guests are asked to bring salads and other picnic items.



Directions to the Reck-Wyatt home: From Athol, starting from Exchange Street, go over the bridge, and turn left on Pequog. Follow this road for a very long time. It eventually turns into Athol Road in Warwick. You will pass the road to Shoemet Pond, go up a hill, around a curve to the left, and come to a four-way intersection called Mayo Corners. This is the site of the old Bowers farm, which used to be very tumble-down, but has been cleaned up considerably. Go another 2 miles or so, until you reach Warwick center, with the library and fountain on your right, and the town common on your left. Go straight across Route 78. Take this road for about half a mile, and take your first paved right, which is almost a fork, onto Northfield Road. Tom and Reva live on this

Road, approximately 2 miles down, on the right. There's a bright red mailbox, and a red reflector nailed to a tree at the base of their driveway. If you get lost, everyone in town knows them; just ask.

Many thanks go to our own secretary and coordinator Emily Koester and Janice Colbert, Education Director at Temple Israel in Greenfield, in addition to Reva and Tom Reck, hosts of the event.

## **ATHOL-ROYALSTON MIDDLE SCHOOL MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL ON THURSDAY THIS WEEK**

The 2003 Multicultural Festival sponsored by the Athol-Royalston Middle School, will be a unique celebration of ethnic cultures through the arts, education, and recreation. It will be held on Thursday evening, May 1, at 6:30 p.m. and will offer a festival atmosphere while providing an exciting educational experience. The event is free and open to students, their parents, and members of the Athol-Royalston community. The evening will feature students, families and community organizations exhibiting arts, crafts, music and food. It is the goal of this event to provide a venue for members of the community to share and celebrate the traditions of their cultural or ethnic heritage.



**REMEMBER.....Temple Israel will be setting up a booth at which we plan to share some delicious Jewish delicacies and also share a display of ritual objects from**

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Shabbat and the Jewish holidays. We are in need of volunteers to do any or all of the following: baking or cooking, lending us Jewish items or artwork for display, manning the booth, contributing Jewish CD's, etc. Please contact Mitch Grosky at 978-249-9090 if you are able to help us out. We really need your help if this is to be a success! Most importantly, however, come on over to observe, participate, and enjoy!

## REMINDERS...THIS MONTH

May 1—6:30 p.m. Multicultural Festival at Athol-Royalston Middle School

May 2 and 3—Shabbaton Weekend

May 18—Sunday--Lag Ba-Omer  
(Think "Jewish Field Day"-Fun & Games) Joint celebration of the holiday in Warwick with Greenfield's Temple Israel  
Volunteers Needed! Please call Emily Koester, Event Coordinator, at 978-544-3135 in order to volunteer.

There's so much happening these days at Temple Israel! Please visit with us, and see what all the excitement is about! We'd love to see you!

For more information, please call Temple Israel in Athol at 978-249-9481 or contact Co-presidents Dr. Myron Maron at 978-724-0238 or Mitchell Grosky at 978-249-9090.
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