

# THE TEMPLE ISRAEL NEWS

ATHOL, MASSACHUSETTS VOL. 3 HESHVAN-KISLEV 5763 NOVEMBER, 2002

tradition in their home -- giving each of their children an \$18 check on the last night of

## A LETTER FROM OUR RABBI

Dear Friends,

Hanukah is a holiday of joy and happiness – one of the most widely celebrated Jewish festive occasions. In this darkest of seasons, with its short days and long cold evenings, we light the little lights of the *hanukkiah* and display it in our windows for eight nights beginning November 29<sup>th</sup>. The light we create is not merely a form of physical illumination but of spiritual illumination as well, intended to bring added meaning and holiness to our lives.

The joy of Hanukah is enhanced through playing games, like dreydel and through eating special foods, like latkes. The festive nature of Hanukah is enriched through family gatherings. Receiving gifts has also become part of our celebrations. Eight gifts for eight nights, seven small gifts for seven nights and one big one for the last night ... every family has their own custom. Yet gifts are not limited to toys or clothing or other physical possessions. Indeed, one of the lessons of Hanukah is that material things are not the ultimate gifts.

Hanukah is firstly a celebration of God's miracles, not only the miracle of the oil, but the miracles that occur at all times, the miracle of life. That too is a gift. Hanukah was a fight for religious freedom, with the victorious Maccabees ousting from the Temple the forces of Antiochus, who profaned the Temple by trying to force the Jews to worship foreign gods. That war for our freedom is still part of our legacy, a gift to us. By celebrating Judaism today, we show that the priceless gift of freedom will not be wasted. The lights in the window remind us of God's presence. That too is a gift. But the ultimate gift is enabling others to give. I know one family that began a

Hanukah, payable to whatever charity the children selected.

This Hanukah, let us focus on even greater treasures, even more precious rewards. Let us discover God's gifts and restore Hanukah to its original luster, giving added light to our lives.

Shalom,

Rabbi Jonathan Perlman



## REFLECTIONS by Mitch Grosky

As a Jew of some 51 years, this has been a September and October unlike any I have known before. I have spoken already of the sense of community which has grown within me since I began this year as co-president, serving beside and working closely with our other co-president, Dr. Maron and so many congregants to prepare our Temple for the arrival of Rabbi Perlman and the High Holy Days. Still, I was quite unprepared for the profound sense of wonder, of awe, which I experienced as I participated in those High Holy Day services conducted with such dedication and passion by our new rabbi and involving so many members of our

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congregation. Seeing old friends and meeting some new ones who brought with the hope for a Temple Israel renaissance made the New Year more special than ever. Although there weren't quite enough children to conduct the Youth Service of the past, there were enough little ones present to remind me again of where we have been and where we need to go. From Kol Nidre to Tashlich, everything seemed to be new and carried new meaning.

What was most amazing, however, was that as special as the High Holy Days were, the first of what I call our Shabbat weekends—our celebration of the first Shabbat of the Month—was even more special. The fact that in 24 hours I spent so many of those hours in prayer and song and discussion and fellowship with some 25-30 congregants and friends made it a day unlike any other in my life. For me—growing up in a Jewish family in Haverhill on the North Shore and attending a conservative Temple which we seemed to visit only for High Holy Day services, Bar Mitzvahs, Chanukah, Simchat Torah, Purim, and Model Passover sedars—for me, the Sabbath had everything to do with a day off from school and Saturday morning cartoons and very little to do with prayer and fellowship. Yet as Friday evening's pot luck dinner and service at Temple Israel blended into Myron's early Saturday morning meditation which merged into the Saturday morning Shabbat service conducted by Rabbi Perlman which finally morphed into a delicious kosher lunch and discussion, I began to learn and to feel what Shabbat is all about. As we studied the Torah and discussed the idea of being our brother's keeper, these Temple Israel brothers and sisters of mine took on greater importance in my life than ever before. Just as during the High Holy Days, we discussed Abraham's decision with regard to Isaac, so too here on Shabbat did we discuss our role in caring for our brothers (and sisters), our role in our synagogue, and in our world. At times there were differences of opinion and at other times we seemed to share consensus, but at all

times we dealt with one another with honesty, respect, and caring.

Well, I can't go on forever (though sometimes it seems that I can), so I'll have to close now with an idea that I got from Myron in one of our many conversations on Judaism this year. T'kun Olom (repairing the world) and T'kun Ha Nefish (repairing and rebuilding the soul) are two ideas which are intrinsic to and inherent in Judaism, Dr. Maron pointed out to me. Now I'm sure that somewhere in my religious school education I learned those words, but if I did, the words—if not the philosophy—lay buried in a childhood which becomes increasingly hazy with the passage of time. Yet I guess those are the feelings I've been experiencing so acutely over these past 2-3 months as I have become more involved with our Temple, its members, my friends. I feel a sense of rebuilding my soul and my heritage, and that makes it seem more possible to work at repairing our world, an increasingly challenging task for us all.

Join us on November 1 and 2 for our next special celebration of the "First Shabbat of the Month." See what all the excitement is about. Sit with us, dine with us, meditate with us, sing with us, pray with us, talk with us. You will get out of this rich experience all that you put in—and likely even more. Perhaps you will even experience a renewal—a rebirth--of your own.

**SUKKOT CELEBRATED WITH  
PRAYER, SONG, AND JOY**

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Thanks to Myron and Suri for hosting an extraordinary Sukkot service at their home in

Petersham. Over 50 adults and children participated in a sukkah which had been specially built for the occasion by Myron, his family, congregants, and friends. Those who missed it this year are already hoping that the Marons will offer a return engagement next year. Stay tuned!



We need your help! Volunteers are needed to coordinate the Friday potluck dinners and the Saturday Temple luncheons. We are hoping that all will volunteer to take at least 1-2 dates during the year. Please sign up with Myron, Mitch, Peter, Emily, or Suri.



## SHABBAT SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

### SET FOR NOVEMBER 1 AND 2

The second of our very special opportunities to enjoy Shabbat as a community comes on the evening of Friday, November 1 and on Saturday, November 2. On Friday evening, we will have a “dairy-vegetarian” potluck dinner at 6:00, followed by a Shabbat service at 7:00 and

an Oneg (luscious desserts!) after the service at 8:00. Then, on Saturday morning, those who want to meditate with Dr. Maron prior to the start of services will arrive at 9:20 for settling in and questions prior to begin meditation at 9:30. If you haven’t tried meditation before, it’s a terrific way to prepare to celebrate the Sabbath. The Shabbat service itself will be from 10:00 to 12:00 with a special lunch at noon. 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 a lovely Ma’ariv/Havdalah service, beginning at approximately 6:15 P.M. Please feel free to attend any or all of the components of this wonderful Shabbat!

## INTERFAITH THANKSGIVING SERVICE UPCOMING



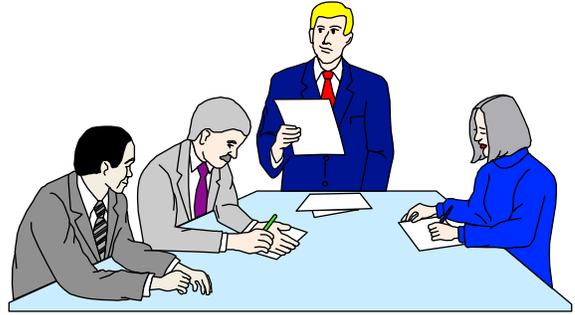
On Sunday, November 24, the Athol Congregational Church will host this year’s

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Interfaith Thanksgiving Service. This is a chance to get together with other community members of the North Quabbin region—members of different faiths and beliefs—and to reach out the hand of friendship, understanding, and cooperation as together we say prayers of thanksgiving. The service, which will include Rabbi Perlman, begins at 7:00 p.m. Athol Congregational Church is located uptown in Athol off Main Street on Hapgood Street. We hope to see a really great turnout from Temple Israel for the wonderful annual event.

can't come for the entire day, please join us for at least the afternoon. We need your help!



## WORK DAY AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING



On Sunday, October 27, there will be a work day for all members of Temple Israel as well as a board meeting for members of the Board of Directors. The Board Meeting runs from 9:30 - 11:00 a.m., while the work day runs from

11:00-4:00 with a lunch being served around 1:00. Myron is also willing to lead a meditation at 9:00. Meditation was really enjoyed by those who participated prior to our recent Shabbat morning service. Members of the board will receive an agenda via e-mail prior to the meeting. We'll go over the minutes from the last meeting, review upcoming events, and discuss lots of old and new business of real importance. Last week, Myron and Mark Dembek carefully checked out conditions in the Temple so that we can be really organized and accomplish just as much as possible on that day. Please come and give us a hand. If you

## SPECIAL SERVICES SET FOR SHABBAT AND CHANUKAH ON DECEMBER 6 AND 7

On Friday, Dec. 6 we'll have a Shabbat service and also celebrate Chanukah with a meal of latkes and Caesar Salad.



Then on Saturday the 7th, we'll start off with meditation right at 9:30 (please arrive by 9:20 for settling in and any questions if you are participating in the meditation). Then we will have Shabbat services, led by Rabbi Perlman, at 10:00 and a pot luck dairy lunch at Noon, with some Chanukah party desserts afterwards. Parents, please bring your children, grandchildren, nephews, nieces---LOTS of CHILDREN! We plan to tell stories, sing songs, and play dreidle. Each child is asked to bring a gift for another child (5 dollar limit, please). Each adult is encouraged to bring a gift for another adult and also one for Tzdakah to be sent to a charity. The day will end with a Ma'ariv/Havdalah service. It will be an

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absolutely fantastic 24 hours! Try hard to be there for some or all of the activities!

P.S. There will be a special "Prep Night" on Thursday, December 5 to set up the room and prepare some delicious latkes. Can you help us set up and/or cook on that evening????



We hope that you have been able to see in person and from our newsletters that this is a very special year for Temple Israel. We have had a wonderful reaction to our High Holy Day services and our First Shabbat of the Month activities. Yet more than ever we need your help. We need volunteers in so many areas. And we need you to participate in our activities. Nearly everyone we have spoken to has enjoyed the services and activities. I thought that the Friday/Saturday which I spent at the Temple at the beginning of the month was absolutely fantastic. We did everything but sleep there (and the Rabbi even did that!) and it felt wonderful to be in such close and continuous contact with congregants and with G\*d over those 24 hours. Most who were there

echoed my comments. Join us, and try to bring your whole family---and maybe some relatives----and maybe some friends-----and maybe.....well, you get the idea. To put it frankly and succinctly, we simply CANNOT make it without your support. We just can't! We need every one of you, and to say that it's a matter of survival is not overstating the situation. We have made a good start--many would say an excellent start--but it is only a *start!* Now is the time to really dig in--together. Thanks again for everything you have done to this point. *We sincerely hope that you will plan to be a part of our community and congregation by becoming a member of Temple Israel.*

**Family Membership:** 200 dollars (or \$500 to \$1000 recommended if you are able)

**Individual Membership:** 100 dollars (or \$250 to \$500 recommended if you are able)

**New Family Membership:** 100 dollars (with additional amount at new member's discretion)

Please make checks payable to: **Temple Israel** and send to the following address:

Temple Israel  
c/o David Koester  
245 Gale Road  
Warwick, MA 01378

**PLEASE SEE THE FORM ON THE BACK OF THE PAGE AND SUBMIT IT WITH YOUR DUES PAYMENT. WE WOULD REQUEST THAT ALL MEMBERS—PAST AND PRESENT, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO MAY ONE DAY CONSIDER BECOMING MEMBERS—COMPLETE THE SURVEY ON THE BACK OF THIS LAST PAGE AND MAIL IT TO DAVID KOESTER AT THE ADDRESS ABOVE.**

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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.

