

# THE TEMPLE ISRAEL NEWS

ATHOL, MASSACHUSETTS VOL. 10 ELUL 5763 SEPTEMBER, 2003

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## RABBI'S MESSAGE

What should the international symbol be for the Jewish people? Should it be the six pointed Star of David, representing the machismo of an ancient king? Should it be the Menorah, symbol of eternal wisdom? Should it be a Hebrew word like “shalom” or “truth” or the simple letter “aleph”? If it were up to me, I would have chosen the shofar. I got the idea after visiting the ancient site of Timna, home to King Solomon’s copper mines in the Negev desert and later a site that was taken over by the Romans during their siege of Israel. A curious etching appears on one of the walls dated sometime after the Roman occupation of Israel. In ancient child-like scrawl, a seven branch Menorah appears next to the drawing of a shofar. I imagine that this was graffiti left by some wandering traveler who visited Timna on his way back to Eretz Yisrael. By creating this symbol, perhaps the traveler was expressing his affirmation that “the people of Israel live” (Am Yisrael Hai) despite the disappearance of the Jewish state from history.

The Menorah, of course, has been confirmed as an important symbol, but what of the shofar? The shofar is a ram’s horn with a small opening on one end and a wide opening on the other end. It is a simple instrument whose loud blast gets its message across. Its symbolic value is powerful. The Jewish people have a knack for getting out of tight situations, defying the odds, and pushing through to the next stage of history with optimism. That is exemplified by the shofar – forcing air through a very small space so that burst of air and sound will travel through the wider space at the end. The introductory lines of the shofar service capture the essence of this symbolism: “From the small narrowness I called to you God, and you answered me from out of the wideness of Your being.”

The experience of the High Holy Days ahead typify the Jewish journey, escaping the constricting parts of life and emerging with a renewed optimism for the future. Best wishes from Beth, myself, and the girls for the gift of renewal in this Season.

Shalom,  
Jon Perlman



## SHABBAT SERVICES and HIGH HOLY DAYS HIGHLIGHT TEMPLE ISRAEL ACTIVITIES IN SEPTEMBER

Another Shabbaton—and yet another opportunity to enjoy Shabbat as a community—comes on the evening of Friday, September 5 and on Saturday, September 6. 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. Wondering what to bring? 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.

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

The afternoon will be filled with learning, discussion, and fellowship. You may join us in singing or learning some traditional Shabbat songs, if you like. After a mid-afternoon break, we return to conclude Shabbat. *At 7:00 p.m. those who are interested will join Dr. Maron in Abulafial chanting. This is a system of Kabbalistic chanting used as a concentration exercise (an energizing experience!)*

We will conclude with some lovely poetry reading and discussion at 7:30 p.m. and then a beautiful Ma'ariv/Havdalah service, beginning at approximately 8:00 P.M.

## SHABBATON ELUL, SEPT. 5-6

“The Journey of the Soul”

Friday night – Sermon topic:  
“Psalms as Traveling Prayers”

Saturday morning- Torah Discussion:  
“Diseases of the Soul”

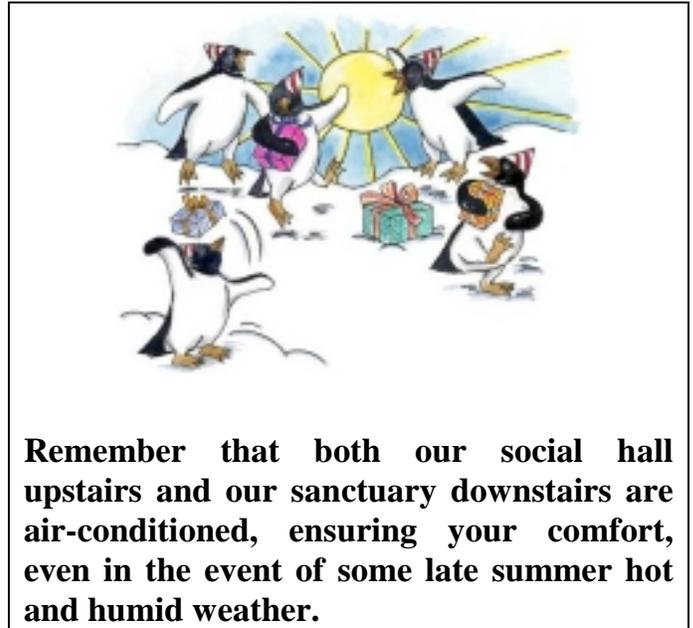
Saturday cholent lunch – Roundtable:  
“Defending yourself in the  
Post-Modern World”

Saturday evening - Poetry Study:  
“More Traveling Prayers”

## **HIGH HOLY DAYS SCHEDULE**

**September 26-28—Rosh Hashana**  
**8:00 PM and 9:00 AM**

**October 5-6—Yom Kippur**  
**6:00 PM, 9:00 AM, 5:00 PM**



**Remember that both our social hall upstairs and our sanctuary downstairs are air-conditioned, ensuring your comfort, even in the event of some late summer hot and humid weather.**

**BEGINNING SOON: FAMILY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SATURDAY MORNING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN!**  
Funded through a grant by the Greenspoon Foundation, obtained by Rabbi Perlman

## **A LOOK BACK on AN AMAZING YEAR**

### **TEMPLE ISRAEL 2002-2003 PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Successful Search for new Temple Israel Rabbi, culminating in agreement with Rabbi Jonathan Perlman of Springfield, Massachusetts
- Nine Friday evening Shabbat service, Nine Saturday morning Shabbat services, Nine Ma'ariv and Havdalah services, including a number of 30-45 minute poetry study-discussion sessions
- Morning and Evening Meditation Sessions with Dr. Maron prior to Shabbat services, as well as a session of Abulafial chanting
- Rabbi-led sermons and discussions on a wide variety of subjects including (but not limited to)

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the following: "Is Israel Part of God's Plan?" "Love Your Neighbor," "Israel and the Palestinians," "Honesty," "The Blessing of Forgetting," "Robbery of the Mind," "Shabbat as a Strategy for Mindfulness," "Seeing is NOT Believing," "Is Anti-Semitism Still With Us?" "Israel and the Media," "The Tsisit," and many others.

- First Summer Shabbat Services in Recent Years
- Friday Pot Luck Dinners and Shabbat Luncheons/Discussions as a part of every Shabbaton
- High Holy Day Services
- Holiday programs including Chanukah (including Latke Dinner and Gift Exchange), Sukkot, Purim, and Lag B'Omer (with Temple Israel in Greenfield)
- Yom HaShoah Play and Presentation
- Bar Mitzvah Tutoring for one child
- Participation in Interfaith Thanksgiving Service
- Multicultural Festival Program participation at Athol-Royalston Middle School
- Several work sessions to clean and paint the temple, involving 8-10 members
- Board of Directors Meeting in October, March, May, and June
- Visit to Fitchburg Synagogue
- Formation of Finance Committee and subsequent meetings of that committee
- Proposal to put stocks into trust fund to be managed by professional firm
- Hosting of Residents from Templeton Development Colony (Fernald School)
- Updating of Temple Israel Contact List to include nearly 100 families
- Formal Newsletters mailed every month, and frequent phone calls
- Child-care during Shabbat morning services
- Formation of e-mail contact list and e-mailed

"advance-copy" newsletters

- Temple Israel News articles and photographs in *Athol Daily News, Worcester Telegram, Gardner News, Greenfield Recorder*
- Continued expansion of membership with many visitors attending Temple Israel for one or more services, and several becoming members
- Regular minyans for both evening and morning services. Attendance at services usually varying from a low of 12-15 members to as many as 35-40 members. Average was usually 18-25 on Friday evening and 15-20 on Saturday morning. Ma'ariv/Havdalah usually saw 12-16 members.
- Special Reunion Weekend Shabbat Services
- Bar Mitzvah of Nate Davis
- The same warmth, kindness, and generosity that have always characterized Temple Israel were in constant evidence at all Temple functions. Our Temple is not only a place to gather to pray together, but also an intellectually stimulating discussion forum and a close-knit home where friends and families can gather to socialize. Temple Israel remains a place where people who care about one another can come to be with one another.

## **TEMPLE ISRAEL 2002-2003 BUILDING/MAINTENANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Painting of all walls and ceilings, including foyer, kitchen, and social hall
- Air-conditioning of sanctuary (allowing for comfortable services May, June, July, Aug., Sept.)
- Major electrical upgrade
- Major plumbing upgrade
- New fencing for courtyard
- Repair of brickwork on exterior of Synagogue (ongoing)
- Creating and renovating living space for Rabbi and Family for Shabbat weekends
- Installation of Energy-efficient lighting in

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sanctuary and throughout building

- Cleaning out of basement
- Burying of outdated books
- Purchase and installation of Drapery refinishing of floors  
(Thanks to Karen and David Davis Family)
- Repair of walls and ceilings in foyer, hallway, and social hall
- Installation of new treads for staircase
- Air-conditioning of upstairs social hall
- Installation of dishwasher, sink sprayer; Refrigerator work
- Purchase of coffee pots (one regular, one decaf)
- Purchase of portable phone for upstairs use
- Introduction of hallway Photo Gallery
- Reorganization of books in classroom and library (ongoing)



## ANNOUNCING TEMPLE ISRAEL'S CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

AN AMBITIOUS AND IMPORTANT PLAN  
TO RAISE \$100,000 FOR CAPITAL  
EXPENDITURES FOR OUR TEMPLE!

This past year has been a wonderful year of

growth for Temple Israel. Please take a moment to read and reflect upon both the great programs and services that have occurred over the past twelve months, and the amazing improvements to the building itself. It is important to note, however, that these many improvements come with a real cost, and that cost places some real demands on each of us.

The coming year and those ahead bring with them new goals, new projects, new expenses. Many of these are listed below. Some can be done in the months ahead, and others form more of a "wish list" for the future.

Can you help Temple Israel in this very important Capital Campaign? To make a separate Capital Campaign donation for the building, please send a check to:

**David Koester at 245 Gale Road  
Warwick, MA 01378.** To hear more about Temple Israel and its goals for the future, please call any of the following members:

**Dr. Myron Maron, Co-President**  
at 978-724-0238

**Mitchell R. Grosky, Co-President**  
at 978-249-9090

**Jeff Plotkin, Immediate Past President**  
at 978-249-4867

Thank you, in advance, for your generosity!

### TEMPLE ISRAEL 2003-2004 AND BEYOND BUILDING/MAINTENANCE NEEDS, GOALS, WISH LIST

- Tightening up windows
- Re-koshering of kitchen
- Courtyard plantings
- Handicapped access upstairs (Chairlift or Full Lift)

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- Kitchen microwave oven
- Work on Sukkah
- New refrigerator (Current fridge is 60 years old)
- Library reorganization
- Office file cabinets
- New floor for hallways (and eventually foyer)
- New gate for courtyard
- Front and rear door mats
- Work on front and back railings and fire escape
- Installation of new mezuzot throughout Synagogue
- Flooring work & replacement of bimah carpeting
- New steam traps
- Update Bibles to new translation and commentary
- Drapes and shades in classrooms
- Continuation of brickwork repair
- Continuation of library reorganization



## JEWISH WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

Last month we announced that during this year each newsletter will introduce you to a fascinating Jewish website. Those of you who have Internet access—either at home or through the public library—will find a wealth of information on a wide variety of Jewish topics. In August we introduced you to **Aish.com**. If you haven't checked it out yet, please give it a try. This month's Jewish Website of the Month is **www.torah.org**. Among the topics on its

home page are the following: Torah Portion, Jewish Law, Ethics, Texts, Basics, Seasons, Features, Answerline, Audio Classes, and Knowledge Base. Jewish Law is divided into beginner, intermediate, and advanced level. The "Basics section" contains the "Judaism Primer," as well as "Judaism in a Nutshell" and "Israel in a Nutshell." There are some great articles on Rosh Hashana, too. The "Answerline" is a great place to ask a Rabbi any question regarding "all thing Judaism." One of the most interesting sections is the "Features" section, which contains columns on the kosher home, the woman's perspective, the next generation, spiritual focus, parents and kids, Israel matters, and the holy days. Each area has a wealth of fascinating articles by many of today's finest writers and Jewish commentators. Give **www.torah.org** a look today.

**QUESTION:** Why does the newsletter come out just a few days before the Shabbaton of the Month? How can we plan if we don't know the month schedule until just a few days before the month's activities begin?

**ANSWER:** It is true that the newsletter generally arrives at the beginning of each month, but it is intended to serve only as a "final reminder" of that month's activities. It is important to point out that we also alert our readers---our congregation---a full month in advance as to the schedule for the upcoming month.

How do we do that? Well, at the end of every newsletter, we summarize the "Coming Events," including all major activities for both the current month AND the month ahead. For example, this month's "Coming Events" mentions not only September events, but also activities in October. All we ask you to do is to note these upcoming events (given to you a month in advance) in your home calendar. We hope that the newsletter provides you with a variety of important and interesting information. -----Mitch Grosky

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## REMINDERS...THIS MONTH

September 5-6—Shabbaton Weekend  
September 26-28—Rosh Hashana  
8:00 PM and 9:00 AM

## AND COMING UP...

October 5-6—Yom Kippur  
6 PM, 9 AM, 5 PM  
October 13—Sukkot (Time to be announced)  
October 19—Simchat Torah: 10:30 AM

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!

*We sincerely hope that you will plan to be a part of our community and congregation by becoming a member of Temple Israel this year.*

**Family Membership:** 375 dollars (or \$500 to \$1000 recommended if you are able)

**Individual Membership:** 200 dollars (or \$300 to \$500 recommended if you are able)

**First year members may pay half price, at their 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

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.