

MARCH 2015

Rabbi's Message

Happy Purim

Hmm....how to dress on Purim this year, (Wednesday evening, March 4th)? Mordecai, Vashti, a princess?

Or, maybe no costume again this year. After all, Purim is a children's holiday.



How many times have we all gone through this same thought sequence? Purim sneaks up on us each year in the late winter before we have had adequate time to properly plan "The" costume that will be the hit of the party. Then, we justify our non-participation by passing the holiday off as a kid's event which we are just supposed to chaperone.

Nothing, however, could be further from the truth. Purim is filled with costumes, games, and all kinds of food and fanfare, but it is legitimately a holiday for adults as well. To understand the holiday in adult terms, it is helpful to refer to the holiday cycle of our Jewish calendar.

According to the Torah, Passover falls in the first month of the year (remember there are 4 different new years in the Jewish calendar) and can be considered our first holiday. During this celebration, we commemorate the event of God bringing the Israelite people out of slavery and into freedom. This is followed seven weeks later by the festival of Shavuot, when God, through Moses, gives the Torah to our wandering people. In the Fall, we observe Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, a time for us to ensure a place in the *Book of Life* through the process of *teshuvah*. Chanukah is then just around the corner, and for eight nights we celebrate the victory of the Hasmoneans (with the help of God) and the miracle of the oil. And

then there is Purim, a celebration whose main text (*Megilat Esther*) does not even mention God!

It seems, when viewed as a whole, that a progression takes place in this holiday cycle. At the beginning is Pesach, when God alone redeems us from slavery. Gradually God's role is diminished and ours is increased until it is up to humanity to bring salvation to the Jewish people. Specifically, it is courageous Queen Esther and Mordecai who save the people.

So why is Purim an adult holiday? Because it teaches a lesson that even as adults we must continually relearn. The future is in our hands. It is up to each of us to stand up for justice and make a difference in our society. Although at times we may feel like such a task is overwhelming, we have abundant opportunities to fulfill this important message of Purim and teach it to our children. Best of all, when we pave the way for a better tomorrow, we do not simply get to wear the costumes of Esther and Mordecai, we get to be Jewish heroes in our own right.

L'Shalom,
Rabbi Ted Riter

Welcome to our new Temple Administrator

We are thrilled to announce the selection of our new Temple Administrator, Rita Hobgood. Many of us already know Rita from her years of volunteering with our annual Bazaar and her association with many BIC families.



(continued on Page 6)

From the President...



Howard T. Katz

Can you believe the Bazaar is here?

At the same time, we are coming to the end of the 2nd book of the Torah, the book of Exodus, or *Shemot*. The anniversary of my Bar Mitzvah is this month, on March 21, *Shabbat Hachodesh*. In 1969, the Torah portions for this Shabbat were, *Vayakhel* and *Pekudei*. The story of *Vayakhel* and *Pekudei* begins with Moses assembling the people of Israel and reiterating how important it is to observe Shabbat. They then convey God's instruction regarding the making of the tabernacle. The people donate the required materials in abundance, bringing gold, silver and copper, blue, purple and red dyed wool, goat hair, spun linen, animal skins, wood, olive oil, herbs, and precious stones. Moses has to tell them to stop giving.

After the tabernacle is complete, a cloud appears above it, signifying the Divine presence that has come to dwell in it.

Here we are, over 3500 years later, at Beth Israel, in Jackson, MS. Our temple is full of precious metals, dyed wools, beautiful wood, and wonderful people. Our annual bazaar is here. Don't stop giving. Give to the silent auction. Give your time to collect items for the silent auction. Give your time to help cook. Give your time to help set-up and clean-up. Appreciate the abundance of wonderful things that we have as Jewish people in the deep south of the United States. It is a great time to be Jewish. It is a great place to be Jewish. Demonstrate your love for Judaism, your love for our Jewish congregation, and your appreciation for the freedom we have to live a Jewish life. Donate the required materials in abundance. Donate your time in abundance. *Bo*, come with me, and I will tell you when it is time to stop giving.

Happy March!

Howard Katz

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**Stephen & Jeanne Rozman
Dave & Molly Mandel
Sam & Laura Ginsberg**



***Let Me Go,
Let Me Go
(Let It Go)***

Frozen Purim Spiel

Come celebrate Purim with:
Esther (Anna), Vashti (Elsa),
Mordechai (Olaf) and the whole cast
of characters.

Wednesday, March 4
7:00 p.m.

BETH ISRAEL OFFICE HOURS

Mondays: CLOSED
Tuesdays: 10:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.
Wednesdays: 10:00 a.m.- 6:00 p.m.
Thursdays: 10:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.
Fridays: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Education Spotlight

Tot Shabbat

March 13th, 5:30 pm

A fun and active way to greet Shabbat.

For children (newborn-7 years old)

with caregivers and siblings.

RSVP to debra@bethisraelms.org by March 11th.

Bagel Bunch

March 1, 11:00 am

This month's Bagel Bunch combines forces with the Purim Carnival!

We'll gather first for a story and a craft, then join in the costume parade & all the fun.

For children not yet enrolled in Sunday School, with caregivers.

Questions and rsvp to ericaabeles@gmail.com

IMPORTANT RELIGIOUS SCHOOL DATES

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL DATES: MARCH 1, 22

HEBREW SCHOOL DATES: MARCH 4, 18, 25

FAMILY LEARNING DAY AND PURIM CARNIVAL

MARCH 1, 9:30 AM—1:30 PM

GRADE 1-2 PARENTS: FAMILY EDUCATION DAY IS MARCH 29TH, 9:30-NOON. STUDENTS SHOULD ATTEND WITH A PARENT, GRANDPARENT, OR ANY OTHER IMPORTANT ADULT IN THEIR LIVES. RSVP TO RABBI KASSOFF AT DEBRA@BETHISRAELMS.ORG OR 601.956.6215 BY MARCH 24TH

JUNIOR YOUTH GROUP

JYG annual Kallah March 27-29, 2015 at Jacobs Camp.

Registration opens mid-February for all 6th-8th graders.

Contact Rabbi Kassoff for more information debra@bethisraelms.org

Registration for Jacobs Camp Summer 2015 Is Now OPEN!



[Jacobs.urjcamps.org/register](http://jacobs.urjcamps.org/register)

PRESCHOOL—SAVE THE DATE

June 29 - Leaps & Bounds with Ms. Kelly
Computer Explorers

July 6 - Soccer Tots

July 13 - TBC

July 20 - Computer Explorers

July 17 - TBC

8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Cost - \$145.00 Per Week

Beth Israel Religious School is Now Accepting Box Tops for Education



Clip your box tops and place them in the box outside the Beth Israel office or in the box on the table in the foyer.

Sisterhood Spotlight: A Message from the Sisterhood Co-Presidents

It's hard to believe that March is here already. Everyone has been busy with preparations for our upcoming Beth Israel Bazaar on March 25th. We have a few cooking dates ahead and we are still receiving home cooked meals and baked goods. Thank you to all who have dedicated their time and effort to help make this a successful event.

We would like to thank Rebecca Laskin for chairing the Matzah ball cooking date, Betsy Samuels for chairing the Kugel preparation, Beth Orlansky for chairing the Tzimmes, and Charna Schlakman for chairing the cooking of the stuffed cabbage.

Susan Fijman is working diligently to get in silent auction items and you can bring your contributions to the gift shop before Shabbat services or during Sunday school. If you have items and need us to pick them up, please contact Susan, Mindy or Cheryl and we will be glad to help. We are receiving items for the white elephant sale. If you have items, please contact Paula Erlich or Charna Schlakman to make arrangements to drop them off. If you have not already volunteered for a particular booth or task the day of the Bazaar and want to participate, please contact Mindy Humphrey and let her know.

Sisterhood continues to grow stronger (we now have 80 members) and we have had many successful and fun events this year. Please join us in April for our next General meeting/Baby Shower, where we will help Blair E. Batson families in need with their newborns.

We are always open and looking for fun new events/ideas for our group. If you have an idea or social action project that you would like to suggest, please contact Mindy or Cheryl and we will work with you to make it happen.

Beth Israel Sisterhood April Luncheon!



Please join us on
April 15th!

Beth Israel Sisterhood will hold our April General Meeting at *Biaggis* in Ridgeland. Our April meeting will include a social service event for Blair E. Batson Hospital. We will be collecting new onesies, blankets, bath towels, wash clothes and burp clothes.

Time: 11:30-1:00
Cost: \$16
Location: Biaggis



RSVP! By April 10th
Frankie Springer: 601-383-1209 or fmspringer5@gmail.com

Upcoming Events

		<u>Chairperson</u>
March 22	Baba Ganush cooking for the Bazaar	Lynda Balfour
March 22	Bazaar Set Up	
March 24	Chopped Liver cooking for the Bazaar	Cheryl Katz
March 25	Beth Israel Bazaar	
April 4	Second Seder	Charna Schlakman
April 15	Baby Shower Lunch to benefit Blair E. Batson	Frankie Springer



Meals on Wheels Needs Your Help
on Our Monday Delivery Routes

If you have an hour or two to spare one day a month, Sisterhood needs drivers to assist with delivery of Meals on Wheels.

The recipients profoundly appreciate our work. It is truly a mitzvah and it is open to the entire congregation, not just Sisterhood members.

The routes are local Jackson areas (e.g., Fondren & Belhaven), and we've mapped them out to be easily manageable.

We suggest two person teams working together (a driver and an assistant) on each route.

To volunteer, please contact
Charna Schlakman at charna515@aol.com

BITY

BITY Buzz:

March 1—

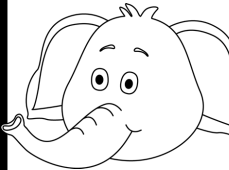
Purim Carnival and the Return of the BITY Auction!! Festivities begin at 11:30 a.m. after Religious School family program.

MARCH 21—

PARENTS: Mark Your Calendars!!

**PARENTS NIGHT OUT from
5:30-10:30 p.m.**

A night of fun for kids age 6 months-10 years while parents enjoy some grownup time. \$25 for first child, \$40 flat rate for two or more siblings.



**Start cleaning out
your closets and drawers.
It's time for
White Elephant Treasures.**

You may bring them to Beth Israel on
Sunday, March 22nd from 9:30 a.m.– 1:00 p.m.
Monday, March 23 from 10:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.

If you have any special concerns that you need help with your items, kindly contact:
Charna at Charna515@aol.com



Are you looking for a way to give something back to our community?

Please help our
FOOD PANTRY Jackson FOOD PANTRY.

Volunteers are needed from
Beth Israel Congregation

March 2-6, 2015
June 29-July 3, 2015
September 14-18, 2015
December 14-18, 2015

If you can volunteer, please contact:
Beth Orlansky at bethorlansky@gmail.com

March Birthdays

- 1 Maxwell Erlich
- 2 Andrew Paul
- 2 Michael Ivshin
- 2 Jay Davidson
- 3 James Freedman
- 6 Bea Gotthelf
- 6 Richard Miller
- 8 Kathryn Wiener
- 8 Howard Katz
- 8 Elizabeth McGregor
- 10 Amanda Margolis
- 10 Lauren Rosenbaum Brown
- 10 Stephen Briggs
- 11 Dylan Klingler
- 12 Alexandra Schneider
- 15 Kay Pollack
- 16 Amy Burleson
- 17 Molly Mandel
- 17 Richard Stamm
- 18 Avery Cohen
- 19 Gary Eriksen
- 19 Morgan Pollack
- 19 Christine Branson
- 20 Myer Mack
- 20 Laurie Neidorf
- 21 Joshua Wiener
- 22 Francine Sherwood
- 22 Ralph Daniel, III
- 22 Michael Lehman
- 23 Tovah Rubinsky
- 24 Penny Brown
- 24 Annie Jacobson
- 28 Jacob Fijman
- 30 Michele Schipper

March Anniversaries

- 2 Sidney and Michelle Mack
- 5 Rusty and Kimberly Schneider
- 11 Michael and Lisa Palmer
- 22 Clay and Mindy Humphrey
- 22 Dave and Donna Kaminsky
- 25 Art and Joyce Salomon
- 26 Roger and Lynne Rosenfield
- 26 Gary and Alice Friedman

(continued from Page 1 — New Temple Administrator)

She began her tenure with us on February 1st and we already feel blessed to have her on staff.

As we welcome Rita to our staff, we offer our gratitude to our BIC congregant Bill Albright. Bill jumped in at a crucial moment before the High Holy Days to fill in for the month. The one month stretched to six, and we are deeply indebted that Bill worked tirelessly to keep our office running in the interim period as we re-thought the position and conducted our hiring process. We're fortunate that Bill will continue to volunteer in our front office when possible.

Rita will oversee the general management of our office and many synagogue functions, including volunteer engagement and communications. One of the things we have learned over the past few months, is that she will be most effective if we are able to bring in volunteers daily to answer phones and the front door, and complete other easily learned tasks. If you would like to volunteer a few hours a week on a regular (or irregular) basis, please contact Rita by phone at BIC or email her: office@bethisraelms.org.

When you enter the front office, you will also notice a few changes. We have removed the sitting area from the office and are encouraging congregants to utilize the beautiful foyer space for visiting and catching up with each other. We have also created new forms for donations, address changes, calendar additions/changes, and room setups. These forms will soon be online as well.

We are very excited for the changes that we are making in the synagogue administration and we welcome your feedback.

When you have an opportunity, please come by and welcome Rita to our BIC community.



EARL HILL INTERFAITH ACADEMY

March 10 – April 21, 2015

Earl Hill Interfaith Academy, a Jewish-Christian-Muslim Dialogue Education Program, is a collaborative initiative to foster interfaith understanding and friendship in the Jackson community. Through open and honest discussion, we hope to eliminate or reduce false stereotypes, prejudices, and fears. Each session will include dinner, presentations, and dialogue.

All sessions are on Tuesday nights at 6:00 p.m. at the locations listed:

March 10, at Northside Baptist Church: Basic Beliefs

March 17, at Northside Baptist Church: The Role of Scripture

March 24, at Dialogue Institute Mississippi: The Binding of Isaac/Ishmael

April 7, at Beth Israel Congregation: Jerusalem

April 14, at Beth Israel Congregation: Fundamentalism & Religious extremism

April 21, at Dialogue Institute Mississippi: Tzedakah, Charity, Sadaka

To reserve your space or if you have questions, please contact Rabbi Kassoff: debra@bethisraelms.org



WE APPRECIATE THE THOUGHTFULNESS OF THOSE WHO SUPPORT BETH ISRAEL CONGREGATION

GENERAL FUND

IN HONOR OF BETH ISRAEL: Alan Kohn

IN MEMORY OF MIRIAM KOLODNEY: Kathryn Wiener

IN MEMORY OF MOLLY HARBOR: Mindy and Clay Humphrey,
Joann Eisenstatt

IN HONOR OF JACKSON HABER'S BAR MITZVAH:

Marilyn and Lanny Greenberg

IN MEMORY OF GERTRUDE GARSHMAN: Amy and Arty Finkelberg,
Anonymous

IN HONOR OF BILL ALBRIGHT: Amy and Arty Finkelberg

IN MEMORY OF FRANCIS LARKIN: Joann Eisenstatt

IN MEMORY OF IRA RUBIN: Rachel and Kenneth Browner

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

IN MEMORY OF MOLLY HARBOR: Kathryn Wiener,
Marcia and Robbie Barron

IN MEMORY OF MARK HEARON: Kathryn Wiener

SATURDAY MORNING FUND

IN HONOR OF BETH ISRAEL: Chloe Edwards, Raizy Grossman

IN HONOR OF GINO GIAMMARCO: Institute of Southern Jewish Life

IN MEMORY OF IRA RUBIN: Helen Greenberg, Joann Eisenstatt

MEMBERSHIP & ENGAGEMENT

ONEG FUND

SATURDAY MORNING FUND

ART FUND

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND

LIBRARY/PRAYER BOOK FUND

MUSIC FUND

PROGRAM FUND

TIKKUN OLAM FUND

WEBSITE FUND

CEMETERY FUND

JEWISH CINEMA MISSISSIPPI

MUSIC FUND

IN MEMORY OF IRA RUBIN: Kathryn Wiener

TIKKUN OLAM FUND

IN MEMORY OF FRANCIS LARKIN: Kathryn Wiener

CEMETERY FUND

IN MEMORY OF BERTHA HELEN GEIGER: Mindy and Clay Humphrey

IN MEMORY OF MARSHALL NIRENBERG: Mindy and Clay Humphrey

IN MEMORY OF TOM UNDERWOOD: Mindy and Clay Humphrey

IN MEMORY OF CLEVELAND BRANSON: Jerry Branson

IN MEMORY OF ELEANOR BRANSON: Jerry Branson

IN MEMORY OF CECILLE SHORNICK: Lynn Crystal

IN MEMORY OF LEO P. GRADINGER: Lynn Crystal

IN MEMORY OF JULIAN WIENER: Lynn Crystal

IN MEMORY OF THELMA MITCHELL: Lynn Crystal

IN MEMORY OF ABBY HESDORFFER: Lynn Crystal

IN MEMORY OF LEE GOTTHELF: Lynn Crystal

IN MEMORY OF MOLLY HARBOR: Lynn Crystal

*Donations made after the 10th of the month will be recognized in the next month's Chai Lights.



Non-Profit Org
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID

Permit #123
JACKSON, MS

Located at 5315 Old Canton Road
Jackson, MS 39211
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 13249
Jackson, MS 39236

Phone: 601-956-6215
Fax: 601-952-0895
E-mail: office@bethisraelms.org

bethisraelms.org

We Remember — Yahrzeits for March 2015

March 1-7

Eda Newhouse
Edward Schur
Ervin Golod
John Hart Lewis
Adeline Fish
H. Harry Fish
Denise Elfassy Hamou
Phillip Eisenstatt
Isaac Mykoff
Giglio Giammarco
*Eugene Hesdorffer, Sr.
Georgia Lawson
*Shelda K. Binder
Henrietta Luxenberg
Sheli Hoffberg

March 8-14

*Moses A. Berman
H. Van Eaton Hart
Alvin Hoffberg
Sue Hailey
Madeleine Bluestein
Ann Silberman
Normarine Barron
Mose Goodman
*Evelyn Goodman
Sol Hoffman
Dorothy Lasky
Pearl W. Davidson
Rebecca Salomon
Ella Sollek
Steven Michael Sherwood

March 15-21

*Oscar Larkin
Laura Bregman
Isabella Greenberg
Julius Greenberg
*Fannie Crystal
Alfred Rosenbaum
Marion Fleischman
Jack Jacobson
*Lorrayne Gavant
Rose Eisenstatt
Martha Dennis

March 22-28

Rose Friedman
*Helen Jill Gavant
O. G. Hailey
Samuil Gorelik
*Eugene Hesdorffer
*Alvin Binder
Herman Kreisman
Ida Ratner

*Memorial Alcove Plaque