



President's Message

by Elsa Conrad

*Behold, it is the springtide of the year,
Over and done is winter's gloomy reign.*
— Union Hymnal, 1914

Clearly, Alice Lucas, author of this song from the Haggadah of my childhood, did not live in New Hampshire, but even a last snow-fall during Passover did not stop Betenu from celebrating the holiday with our annual Potluck Second Seder. And as I write this, it looks as if our observance may actually have brought back the long-awaited spring weather.

OK, maybe not. But our seder brought warmth, companionship and new thoughts about Passover and spring. Thanks to all who participated, especially those who stayed for cleanup! Special thanks to **Roberta Pavoll**, who prepared the seder plates. As an aside, we all wish Roberta a very speedy recovery after her recent surgery. We hope you're feeling better!

Passover also marks a series of transitions here at Betenu:

- ◆ May is **Rav Nate DeGroot's** last month as rabbinic intern, though we certainly hope to see him again before and after his year in Israel. Nate's personal life is also evolving, as he counts down to his wedding in June! He will be with us the first two weekends in May, including a potluck farewell meal

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before services on Friday, May 9 and possibly an outdoor Havdalah on May 10, weather permitting. That plan is still evolving, so check the weekly news for details.

- ◆ The Annual Meeting on Sunday, May 19 will usher in a new board. While some nominees on our slate are board veterans, we're also nominating new members to freshen our ideas. You'll find a preview and proxy form on page 5 of this issue.
- ◆ After taking a leave from Betenu events to allow for a smooth transition to a new rabbinical presence, **Rabbi Emeritus Joshua Segal** will return to Betenu this month.

To that last point, Rabbi Segal will take a break from his well-earned retirement to serve as lay leader in a pre-Shavuot celebration on Friday, May 30 at 7:30 pm. We do not have any confirmands this year, but we're hoping to continue the tradition of bringing back our younger generation. If you know any of our confirmands, be sure to let them know!

Whether you attend one event or many this month, I look forward to seeing you. It's an ideal time to share thoughts and ideas as we plan Betenu's direction for 2015, so tell us what's on your mind.

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CONGREGATION BETENU

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- ◆ Sarah Goldstein
- ◆ Amanda Leary
- ◆ Peter James Stewart

NEWS & NOTES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank You!

- ◆ All families and teachers who contributed items to the Children's Passover Seder
- ◆ All who attended the 2nd night seder
- ◆ All who helped set up and clean up for our seders
- ◆ The Blotcky, Liberman and Conrad/Conley families for hosting the oneg on April 11
- ◆ The Dube family for their donation of bottled water
- ◆ Allison Leary for helping during the children's seder
- ◆ Roberta & John Pavoll for preparing Seder plates

CONTRIBUTORS

- ◆ All purchasers of Hannaford gift cards for our fundraising
- ◆ Anonymous
- ◆ Lawrence & Donna Friedman
- ◆ Sara Murphy
- ◆ Paula Silver



CONDOLENCES

We regretfully announce the passing of William Noyovitz, grandfather of Sarah Noyovitz and father of Paul Noyovitz, and wish to extend our sympathies to the Silver-Noyovitz family. May his memory be a blessing.

Yahrzeits

In Loving Memory

- | | |
|--|--------|
| ◆ Elinor Fierman
twin sister of Elaine Schwartz | May 1 |
| ◆ Ruth Cushner
aunt of Sheryl Liberman | May 4 |
| ◆ Rebecca Groden
grandmother of Karen Satz | May 4 |
| ◆ Estelle Mailman
mother of Steve Mailman | May 10 |
| ◆ Solomon Macks
grandfather of Elsa Conrad | May 10 |
| ◆ Sofia Munteanu
mother of Bety Dar | May 17 |
| ◆ Elaine Rimalover
mother of Robert Rimalover | May 18 |
| ◆ David Vincent Romanelli | May 21 |
| ◆ Zara Milamed
aunt of Sheryl Liberman | May 24 |

CONGREGATION BETENU OFFICERS

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Trustees At-Large: Sara Murphy 603-465-7119, Joel Silberberg 603-472-8143
Oneg/Interfaith Representative: Roberta Pavoll 603-672-9820
Publicity: Barbara Bailey 603-880-9355, Marcella Dube 603-673-9412
Rabbinical Intern: Nate DeGroot rabbii@betenu.org
Rabbi Emeritus: Joshua Segal emeritus@betenu.org

SHOTS OF THE SEASON: Shavuot in Israel



To learn more about Shavuot and our own unique spring tradition at Betenu, see page 3.

Rabbi Emeritus Joshua Segal to Lead May 30 Service

Shavuot, occurring June 3-5 this year, often takes a back seat to better-known Jewish holidays. But if spring's arrival makes you feel like celebrating, join us for an early Shavuot service on May 30—led by none other than **Rabbi Emeritus Joshua Segal**.

In addition to its place as *Yom Ha-Matan Torah* (The Day of the Giving of the Torah), Shavuot traditionally marks the end of the grain harvest and the start of fruit harvesting. Abundant fruit and dairy are staples of this agricultural festival, but it is also a key life-cycle event at Betenu.

Going back to our early days, Rabbi Segal invited past confirmands far and wide to return for Shavuot. The result



"We're putting the band back together!"

was a fascinating reunion with many past students returning as adults with their own families. So Joshua's return as lay leader in May is especially apt.



Celebrate the fruits of our rich heritage with Rabbi Emeritus Joshua Segal on May 30.

TEST YOUR SHAVUOT KNOWLEDGE

1. What does the Hebrew word *Shavuot* mean?
2. Why is it a custom to decorate our homes and synagogues with flowers and green plants?
3. What is the *Omer*?
4. Besides Shavuot, what are the "pilgrim holidays" for visiting the temple in Jerusalem?

ANSWERS

1. Weeks.
2. During *Matan Torah*, Mount Sinai was covered with foliage.
3. The counting of days between Passover and Shavuot.
4. Passover and Sukkot.

EDUCATION NEWS

by Sheryl Liberman

Last Day of Classes is Sunday, May 4

Progress reports will be handed out after our last Sunday school class on May 4. Highlights that day include a fashion show for students in grades 4-6 (parents invited to attend at 11 am), and project practice for our Bar/Bat Mitzvah students.

Rav Nate-led Shabbat Services, May 2 and May 9

Rav Nate DeGroot will lead services on May 2 and May 9, including a May 9 potluck farewell at 6:30 pm with project presentations by our B'nei students. Thanks to the **Leary** and **Lessard/McAdams** families for onegs on May 2 and May 9!

Fulfilling School Year Requirements

Students have through July to attend Shabbat services and get credit for this school year. Grades 1-3 need four (4) services; grades 4-5 need seven (7) services; grades 6-8 need fifteen (15) services.



IN BRIEF

NH CROP Hunger Walk, May 4

The Souhegan Valley Interfaith CROP Walk against hunger starts in Milford at 2 pm on Sunday, May 4. Registration is at St. Patrick's Church, 34 Amherst Street, starting at 1 pm that day. To register, donate or get information, contact **John David** at 801-7108.



Yard Sale Needs Organizers

If you love yard sales, here's a chance to plan one for Betenu! We need volunteers to help organize a spring fundraiser. Contact the office for details. In addition, we're looking for event ideas this summer! Contact **Sheryl Liberman** at 424-4609 or email saml54@comcast.net.

See "The Chosen" in Manchester, May 30 through June 1

Chaim Potok's classic novel will be staged May 29, May 31 and June 1 at the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire, 698 Beech Street in Manchester. For tickets and information, visit online at www.mctf.info.

MC, Visa and Discover

Your credit card can now pay Betenu dues, tuition, gift purchases or donations! Just call the office or stop in today to arrange the charge details.

Help for the Hospitalized

Privacy laws keep hospitals from calling us when our members are admitted. If you need a little help or would just like some friendly conversation, ask for the hospital chaplain and request that Betenu be notified. We're here for you!

During these 49 days,
a traditional ban on
haircuts and shaves
can help modern Jews
sprout fresh insights
on Shavuot and
revelation.

The Omer of Hair

by Rav Nate DeGroot

WHEN the Israelites left Egypt for the Promised Land, they were only a few days' journey from the land of milk and honey they so desired. But instead of taking a direct route, they traveled circuitously by way of Mount Sinai. For 49 days they wandered before they received the Torah amidst great thunder and lightning at the foot of the towering mountain.

Why did they not take a direct route? Because liberation from slavery depended inextricably upon their receiving of the Teaching, of the Torah. They went from *avadim* (slaves) of Pharo, to *oved* (serving God). And it was through the revelation of Torah that this covenant was consummated.

BEGINNING with the second night of Passover, Jews around the world began counting the Omer—for 49 nights reciting a blessing, repeating a set liturgy, and symbolically counting the seven weeks it took the Israelites to go from liberation to revelation, from Egypt to Mt. Sinai, from Passover to Shavuot. This metaphoric re-living of the wandering through the wilderness culminates with Shavuot, this year beginning on the night of June 3.



Traditionally during this period of Omer counting, it is prohibited to, among other practices, have your hair cut or to shave. While the historical significance of this practice is somewhere between irrelevant and opaque for most modern liberal Jews, the practical and spiritual significance for us today can be robust.

Personal growth, like hair growth, is often imperceptible. We can go days at a time without reflection, without pausing, without noticing the changes that are happening within and around us. We have experiences that shape us and conversations that move us. Yet, most of the time, we are oblivious to the growth that is happening.

THEN one day, out of the blue, we look in the mirror and find ourselves saying, “Wow. I need a haircut!”

So too, most of the time, with spiritual and personal growth. One day, out of the blue, you are aware that you are no longer the same person you were the last time you had a good long look in the mirror.

DURING these 49 days, we are presented with an opportunity to preempt this surprise. We are given a template to be intentional. With each new day, we track our growth and get to see it as part of a larger goal, in service of our personal and spiritual goals of who and how we want to be. On Shavuot, we celebrate the self that we've become.

May your growth this Omer season be in shaggy service of revelatory self-fulfillment—and may your Shavuot shaving be joyous.

Do you have questions or comments on this article? Contact Rav Nate by email, at rabbi@betenu.org.

Attend Our Annual Meeting on May 18!

BETENU'S annual meeting convenes at 7 pm on Sunday, May 18. In addition to a vote on the 2015 budget, elections will be held to fill the offices of President, VP of Education, VP of Administration, Treasurer and Executive Trustee (two positions). If you are interested in serving in any of these positions, please telephone 886-1633 or email the Betenu office at betenu@betenu.org. NOTE: a quorum is required to hold the meeting, and all proxies count toward the quorum. If you cannot attend, please give your proxy to an attending member. We hope to see you there!



THIS YEAR'S SLATE

Co-Presidents

Elsa Conrad

Sheryl Liberman

VP Administration

Barbara Bailey

VP Education

Pam Blotcky

Treasurer

OPEN

Executive Trustees

Steve Blotcky

Allison Leary

PROXY VOTING FORM*

**Congregation Betenu Annual Meeting
Amherst, New Hampshire – May 18, 2014**

I / We, _____, being entitled to
vote at the Congregation Betenu Annual Meeting, hereby appoint
_____, as proxy* to vote
on my/our behalf at the 2014 meeting.

_____ (signature)

_____ (date)

***NOTE: Assign to one person only.**

A member can only vote the proxy for two other members.

Please make sure this person can hold your proxy.

CAN'T ATTEND?

Use this sample form to assign your voting proxy to an attending Betenu member.

May at Betenu

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2 Rabbi-led Service, 7:30 pm	3 <i>Emor</i>
4 Last Sunday School with Rav Nate, 9 am Crop Walk, 1 pm	5 Yom Hazikaron	6 Yom Ha'atzmaut	7	8	9 Rav Nate's Farewell Potluck Dinner, 6:30 pm B'nei Mitzvah Presentations	10 <i>Behar</i> Outdoor Havdalah (weather permitting)
11 Mother's Day	12 Executive Board Meeting, 7:30 pm	13	14	15	16 Lay-led Service, 7:30 pm	17 <i>Bechukotai</i>
18 Annual Meeting, 7 pm	19	20 Yizkor	21	22	23 Lay-led Service, 7:30 pm	24 <i>Bemidbar</i>
25	26 Memorial Day	27	28 Yom Yerushalayim	29	30 Early Shavuot Service led by Rabbi Emeritus Joshua Segal, 7:30 pm	31 <i>Naso</i>

June at Betenu

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3 Erev Shavuot	4 Shavuot	5 Shavuot Yizkor	6 Lay-led Shavuot Service, 7:30 pm	7 <i>Beha'alotecha</i>
8	9	10	11	12	13 Lay-led Service, 7:30 pm	14 <i>Shelach</i>
15 Father's Day	16	17	18	19	20 Lay-led Service, 7:30 pm	21 <i>Korach</i> Summer Begins
22	23 General Board Meeting, 7:30 pm	24	25	26	27 Lay-led Service, 7:30 pm	28 <i>Chukat</i>
29	30					