



RABBI'S MESSAGE: A MINI-HISTORY OF BETENU

On Saturday evening, December 5, we had a wonderful event to commemorate Betenu's 25th Anniversary. Based on the time of arrival of guests, it appeared that some people thought the event was an open-house rather than a programmed event. As a result, a number of people missed the program completely. This month's message is the text of my presentation, although, I wrote it only for backup purposes. What is written is not what I spoke.

The event finished as planned around 7 PM, but the clean-up crew, Elissa Kahn, the Blotckys, the Sterns and Rahel, continued to schmooze until past 9PM.

I want to especially acknowledge Roberta Pavoll, without whom this event might never have happened and as I said at the event: I look forward to sharing many more years and simchas in the years to come.

Shalom u-ve-ra-cha, Joshua Segal

History of Betenu

December 2008 - 25th Anniversary of the Founding of Betenu
Congregation Betenu, Nashua, NH

The start of Betenu meant that the temple needed a name. The word Betenu means both "Our house" and "Our temple". The founders hoped that those who joined Betenu would feel both the hominess of Betenu as well as the more solemn aspect of being a temple. On November 4, 1983, the document of incorporation was signed. It required five signatures. The five were Diane Levine, Valerie Segal, Joshua Segal, Arthur Siegel and Lois Siegel.

Once an organization was formed, we needed to have a constitution and by-laws. The committee that assembled those was headed by Debbie Pignatelli, who has become a state-wide political force, but also, no longer a member.

From November of 1983 thru March 1984, the only official Betenu events were a monthly Kiddush for the Jewish residents of Greenbriar Nursing Home. The only remaining Betenu people who were participants back then were Sanders and Rowena Burstein. Betenu's first service was held on April 6, 1984 at the Main Street Methodist Church, which, with minor exceptions, was our place of worship until spring of 1992. Betenu will be eternally grateful to the Main Street Methodist Church and its minister at the time, Reverend Ralph Bruce, for their hospitality over those years.

In spring of 1984, Betenu had a charter member drive which yielded 27 families. Parts of 5 families are still with Betenu. Betenu members are highly mobile. Most of the turn over in membership has occurred through relocation or divorce. However, there have been a few who have left for philosophical differences and a few who joined and remained members, only until the last of their children finished their education.

The first High Holydays at Betenu were held in the fall of 1984 in the Greenbriar Nursing Home. I was still serving in Keene. Betenu's lay leadership including David Grinstein, Christina Grinstein and Marian Weisenfeld led services that year.

(Continued on page 2)



RABBI'S MESSAGE (continued):

No aspect of our synagogue is more important than Jewish continuity. The education that we pass to the next generation is the single most important thing a congregation does. When Betenu's religious school opened in the fall of 1984, there were about 25 children in three classes that met in Rabbi Segal's home. The staff was Teri Ruby, Suretta Williams and Valerie Segal.

From, 1986 to 1987 the religious school met in an office condo on West Hollis, courtesy of Drs. Larry Learner and Michael Rosenfeld. From 1987 to 1991, the school rented space in the "Adult Learning Center".

In 1990, Betenu began looking for the "right building." Many contributed to the efforts that culminated in the acquisition of this facility, but the dedicated leadership of Geoffrey Gross was the catalyst that made it happen. It was a real credit to the membership who banded together in the absence of any single large donor.

Philosophically, Betenu is "main stream reform", sometimes referred to as traditional reform or modern reform. For those who are not sure what that means, Reform is based on the concept that God gave us two kinds of commandments. One set was ethical and it applies for all time. The other set of commandments were ritual and intended for the people living then. Many reform Jews choose to observe some or all of the ritual commandments, because they add meaning to our lives. The rituals build bridges with other Jews, our ancestors and our extended families. In 2001, Betenu formalized the commitment to Reform Judaism by joining the UAHC, now the URJ.

Betenu also has accommodation for Reconstructionism. Reconstructionism grew out of Conservative Judaism in the 1930's. Like Reform Judaism, ritual commandments are by personal informed choice. However, while the informed reform Jew chooses because a commandment adds existential meaning to his/her life, the informed Reconstructionist says, I will reconstruct new reasons for the old commandments because they have kept Jews from assimilating.

Betenu's religious school is pre-school through post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah. To be considered for Bar or Bat Mitzvah, children must agree to complete a post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah education requirement. One measure of a congregation's success and a Jewish school's success is how many of its members and grads result in another generation of Jews.

However, another measure of interest is that almost 20% of the Betenu grads have reported that they have taken one or more courses in college on Hebrew, Judaica or Jewish History. One Betenu alumnus, Mark Popovsky is now Rabbi Popovsky. Some have suggested that part of what motivates our alumni in that direction came from what they got from Betenu.

Educationally, Betenu people are very degree-ed. About 75% of the membership is involved in high-tech or the medical field. Best estimates indicate that the average Betenu adult has a Masters Degree.

The future of Betenu is on solid ground with quality and dedicated leadership of our board of directors...

The worst reasons for not joining Betenu:

- I saw your wife in the mall on Shabbat!
- When we were meeting in the Main Street Methodist Church, and having religious school at the Adult Learning Center, both within a mile of Temple Beth Abraham, a potential member from Hudson said that her family was joining TBA because it was closer to them.

Be-ve-ra-cha,
Joshua Segal



BETENU BITS



**BETENU NOW
ACCEPTS MC & VISA!**



You can use MasterCard or VISA to pay membership fees, school tuition, gift store purchases, or even to make a donation! Call the office (or stop in) to arrange the charge and let us know the amount and what it's for.

BETENU THANKS

- ✧ October / November oneg hosts.
- ✧ Lay Leader(s): Rahel, Elsa Conrad, Sheryl Liberman and Rabbi Segal, who led on his day off.
- ✧ Linda Gerson for donation of arts & crafts supplies.
- ✧ Sheryl Liberman for bringing our donations over to SHARE.
- ✧ Rahel for her music, including her special musical services in January.
- ✧ Gordon & Carolee Clarke for donation of a cart for the TV and components.
- ✧ For book donations to the library:
The Rimalover family, Ayelet Binstock, Rabbi Segal, and Rahel

THANKS TO FEC LUNCH VOLUNTEERS

Once again, the brunch at the Faith Episcopal Church was a great success. Thanks to everyone who donated to this year's event. Special thanks to Rowena Burstein, Elsa Conrad, Betsy Franks, Suzanne Maine, and Roberta Pavoll for helping with setup and/or cleanup and to Sheryl Liberman and David Stern for transporting food and drink.

CONGREGATION BETENU

- Rabbi:** Joshua Segal 603-886-1633
or rabbi@betenu.org
- President:** Dave Spokane 603-672-0554
or president@betenu.org
- VP Finance:** Peter Stein 603-465-6036
- VP Admin:** Roberta Pavoll 603-672-9820
- VP Educ:** Sheryl Liberman 603-424-4609
- Secretary:** Elissa Kahn 603-673-8283
- Treasurer:** Joel Silberberg 603-472-8143
- Asst. Treas:** Vivian McGuire 603-882-3139
- Trustee:** David Stern 603-880-0442
- Trustee:** Michael Goldstein 603-424-9953
- Trustee@Large:** Sara Murphy 603-465-7119
- Past Pres:** Elsa Conrad 603-879-9189
- Newsletter Editor:** Elissa Kahn

**FEBRUARY
BIRTHDAYS**



Quillah Burstein	Matthew Spokane
Benjamin Gingras	Ana Sabrina Ellis
Dan Kahn	Paris Dzen
Drew Sagon	



BETENU BITS continued

IMPORTANT NOTICE

In an effort to cut costs, this newsletter will now be sent electronically as a .pdf file email attachment. If you need a hard copy printed and mailed to you each month, please notify the office. There will be a few copies available at Betenu, and some copies of the calendar pages as well.

ATTENTION GROCERY SHOPPERS...

Betenu is still collecting receipts from **Shaw's Supermarkets and Star Markets**. Once we reach a total of \$5,000 or more we will submit them and receive back a check for about 1 percent. Now that may not sound like much, but it's free money, and those grocery receipts add up over time.

It's easy, it's free, and it's something you can do for Betenu. Collect them from family, friends and neighbors! So **SAVE THAT RECEIPT!**



We have received about \$47 from this program and are about ready to submit the next batch - Thank you for the receipts!!!!



AND FOR ONLINE SHOPPING... TEXTBOOKS AND A MILLIION OTHER THINGS...

Don't forget to shop through Betenu's link to Amazon.com. Betenu will receive a percentage of the purchase price.

You can shop for books and a million other things through this link. Just go to our website: www.betenu.org, put your cursor over "Search new and used, Amazon.com", and when the cursor changes, click. Or you can enter your search right there and click "Go".

It's that simple! And don't forget to purchase your textbooks here!

We receive about \$20 a month from this program - Thank you & keep shopping!!!!



BETENU BITS continued

**ROSH CHODESH
FOR WOMEN**

Sundays at 4pm:
March 1st
March 29th

Join the Rosh Chodesh group for a short service, group discussion and nosh. For more information contact Sheryl Liberman 424-4609 or SAML54@comcast.net.

KABBALAH GROUP

Saturdays at 12:30pm
February 21st at Betenu

Congregation Betenu and Temple Beth Abraham have a Kabbalah group. The suggested book is Inner Space by Kaplan. For more information contact Sheryl Liberman 424-4609 or SAML54@comcast.net.

DONATIONS

Congregation Betenu acknowledges with appreciation the following contributions made during the months of December & January:



Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
Stephen & Nancy Sagon

High Holy Day Appeal
Elsa Conrad
Susan & Joel Mascott

General Fund
Elsa Conrad

School Fund
Suzanne Maine

Oneg Fund
Jamie, Andy, and Fiona Stewart
In memory of Peter Stewart

ONEG SHABBATS

To host an Oneg, one brings the desserts, fruit, and challah, and sets up and cleans up.

To sponsor an Oneg, one pays \$54 and the Oneg committee will purchase the food, set up and clean up. Either way you do it, you can honor a birthday, an anniversary, or any other special event in your life, by choosing the Oneg closest to that special date. Or you can remember the Yahrzeit of a loved one by hosting or sponsoring the Oneg on the Shabbat when you come to say Kaddish. If you have a date in mind, please call Roberta Pavoll at 672-9820.

The following Onegs will be hosted by:

- February 6: Tu B'Shevat Pot Luck Seder
- February 13: School: Goldstein, Seiden, Goff
- February 20: Jewish Federation of New Hampshire
- February 27: Open



Won't you please choose an Oneg date and help foster the sense of community at Betenu? Thank you.



February 2009

S M T W T F S

1 9:30 am Religious School #19	2	3	4	5	6 6:30 pm Tu B'Shvat Pot Luck Seder	7
8 9:30 am Religious School #20 Sunset: Tu B'Shvat begins	9 7:30 pm Programming Meeting—all are invited	10	11	12	13 7:30 pm Rabbi-led Service	14 10:30 am Tot Shabbat
15 9:30 am Religious School #21	16 7:30 pm General Board Meeting—all are invited Pres. Day	17	18	19	20 7:30 pm Rabbi-led Service Federation ONEG	21 12:30 pm Kabbalah @ Betenu
22 NO Religious School	23	24 R Ch Adar	25	26	27 7:30 pm Lay-led Service	28



March 2009

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1 9:30 am Religious School #22 4PM—Rosh Chodesh	2	3	4	5	6 7:30 pm Rabbi-led Purim Service	7
8 9:30 am Religious School #23 4pm—Ed. Comm. Mtg	9 Sunset: Purim begins	10	11	12	13 7:30 pm Rabbi-led Service	14 10:30 am Tot Shabbat
15 9:30 am Religious School #24	16 7:30 pm Executive Board Meeting	17	18	19	20 6:30 pm Rabbi-led Shabbat Across America	21
22 9:30 am Religious School #25	23	24	25	26 R Ch Nisan	27 7:30 pm Lay-led Service	28
29 Rel Sch snow make-up day 12 noon— Pre-Passover Brookline trip	30	31				



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT: THE MORE THINGS CHANGE...

At the January meeting of the Executive Board, we were going through our normal agenda - Finances, Education, Building, Programming, and Miscellaneous topics. Each month we talk about these topics, and we always say "If only we had a few more volunteers, we could do..." Being a "glass half-full" kind of guy, I took a pause and noticed that we had 10 people present at the board meeting, and we could point to at least that many again who contribute something significant to Betenu each year. In fact, we probably have 30% of our membership who find ways to give time to Betenu in significant ways. Having been part of other volunteer organizations, I would say we do pretty well.

We greatly appreciate and value our volunteers, and recognize that a commitment to our congregation represents time away from other interests. It is best for our long-term health to continually turn over our population of volunteers to bring new ideas and perspectives to Betenu.

As we move from winter towards spring, there will be opportunities for people to come forward and help. We will be forming our nominating committee for positions that will be opening on the board. We also have Purim and Passover events being planned that could use "owners".

If you are an active volunteer at Betenu, thank you for your commitment. If you have been active in the past, and have taken some time away to recharge your batteries, please consider becoming more involved again. If you are new to our congregation, please talk to me, or any Board member, for ideas on how you can contribute.

Please think about getting involved. Volunteering at Betenu is a richly rewarding experience. I highly recommend it!

L'Shalom
Dave

AND SPEAKING OF GETTING INVOLVED...

Board Positions: Right. The annual meeting isn't until May, but here are the board positions that will come up for a vote this year: President; Financial VP; Assistant Treasurer; Secretary; and two Executive Trustees.

And everyone is invited to the programming meeting Monday, February 9th at 7:30 pm!



COMING UP...

PROGRAMMIN MEETING

Monday, February 9 at 7:30 PM

Bring your ideas to the programming meeting. There will be opportunities for volunteering. If you cannot attend, but would like to have some input or volunteer, please let the office know: 886-1633.



TOT SHABBAT WITH RAHEL

Saturday, February 14 at 10:30 AM

For ages 2-5 yrs. with parents. Please bring a nosh and drink!



RABBI-LED SERVICE AND FEDERATION-SPONSORED ONEG

Friday, February 20 at 7:30 PM

Join us for A Service with the Rabbi. The oneg will be sponsored by the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire.

TU B'SHVAT POT LUCK SEDER

Friday, February 6 at 6:30 PM

Join us for the Tu B'Shevat Seder and Service with the Rabbi. Donate and help us exceed the number of trees we planted in Israel last year! If you haven't already signed up, please call Elaine Schwartz: 882-9093.



TOT SHABBAT WITH RAHEL

Saturday, March 14 at 10:30 AM

For ages 2-5 yrs. with parents. Please bring a nosh and drink!





EDUCATION

REGULAR RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Doors open for regular classes at 9:15 AM. If you haven't already registered your child(ren) please call the temple office at 886-1633 to get a registration form.

POST HEBREW SCHOOL

Registration is open year round. Call the temple office at 886-1633 for a registration form.

ADULT EDUCATION

HEBREW CLASSES

Rahel will be offering her evening adult education classes at Betenu on Monday evenings between 5 and 9 pm. Please email or call her (RahelMusic1@yahoo.com or call 672-3682) for info. Monthly fees are \$62 (or \$18 per class).

Adult Hebrew – For beginners and continuing students. This is MODERN Hebrew (reading, writing, speaking and comprehension) and leads to Biblical. Textbook required.

INFO FROM VISION Voice of Israel Initiative of NH
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Check the website for the next **VISION MEETING** and other important information. Meetings will be held on Wednesdays and Thursdays this year! All friends of Israel are welcome.

Check out www.nh4israel.org for more upcoming events, articles and more...

INFO FROM SNHJMC Southern NH Jewish Mens Club
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Sunday morning topics will include our annual sports and children's breakfasts.

One big change we're trying out this year is a move of the breakfast start times from 9:30 to 10:00. You'll be able to get another 30 minutes of sleep before every breakfast!

So please reserve the following dates for the 2008-09 breakfasts:

February 1, March 1, March 29, and May 3

We also plan to have another evening event this year. Last year's Jazz Night was a big success and we're working on bringing more great entertainment. Stay tuned for more details.

Membership form: <http://snhjmc.home.comcast.net/~snhjmc/resources/SNHJMCFORM.pdf>

BETENU BITS continued



**Yahrzeits for
February**



Joan Dickes	mother of Ellen Lubitz	February
Matthew Werner	brother of Sara Murphy	February 2
Stanley Moses 'Papa' Krohn		February 8
David Michelson		February 11
Maurice "Maury" Franks	father of Paul Franks	February 13
Kate Berger Gross		February 14
Charlotte Dinkelopiell	grandmother of Judith Silverman	February 14
Arlene Mignault	friend of Rahel Limor	February 15
Betty McCoy	friend of Elissa Kahn	February 15
Stanley Moses 'Bud' Krohn Jr.		February 18
Gertrude Kantorowicz	aunt of Sonia Ascher	February 18
Goodman Burstein	father of Sanders Burstein	February 19
Thelma Schiff	Grandmother of Fern Seiden	February 22
Wayne Lamminen	brother of Lin Robinson	February 25
Harold Sandhaus	husband of Martha Sandhaus	February 25

SAD NEWS:

Sadly we inform you of the death of Lois Goff, mother of Steve Goff. May the Goff family be comforted among the mourners of Zion.

SAD NEWS:

Sadly we inform you of the death of Harriet Levine, mother of Linda Gerson. May the extended Levine family be comforted among the mourners of Zion.



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SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA/CANADA March 20, 2009

This year on Friday, March 20th, Congregation Betenu is joining with synagogues throughout North America in sponsoring "Shabbat Across America". Coordinated by the National Jewish Outreach Program, we will learn about and share the beauty of Shabbat as a community. We will have a short, interactive prayer service and explanation of Sabbath customs and rituals and share a delicious catered meal and joyous song.

Details to follow in your weekly email. Tickets required.

Want to help? We need hosts, help with setup and cleanup, and volunteers for D'var Torah.

Please contact: Rahel at 603-672-3682 or rahel@rahelmusic.com, or
Elissa at 603-673-8283 or eckahn@hotmail.com.