



May/June 2010  
Iyyar/Sivan/Tamuz 5770

Morgantown, West Virginia

It is a Tree of Life to  
those that hold fast to it.

**RABBI**

David Feder

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**COOPERS ROCK SHABBAT**

The Board of Tree of Life extends a personal invitation  
for you to join us at our

**Annual Coopers Rock Shabbat**  
**6:00 pm**  
**Friday, June 4th**

We will start with a vegetarian-dairy Pot Luck Shabbat Dinner  
followed by Shabbat Services on the Rock.

In case of extremely severe weather, services and dinner will take place at Tree of Life. In the case of mild to moderate rain, services and dinner will take place at Coopers Rock. Please check the answering machine at 292-7029 if you have questions that evening.

*The Board plans to make the gathering extra special.*

*We want as many members as possible attend  
so we can hear your input for future events at Tree of Life.*

Put it on your calendar  
and  
put yourself in the next set of photos.

**SEE YOU AT THE ROCK!**





**Rabbi  
David  
Feder**

Passover has already passed us by and Shavuot is still a few weeks ahead. We are in the period of sefirat ha'omer, the counting of that period of fifty days between Pesach and Shavuot. The omer refers to the sheaf of barley that was brought to the Temple on the second day of Passover. From that point, seven complete weeks would be counted off and the following day, day 50, was observed as Shavuot, the Feast of Weeks. This counting mirrors the journey of our ancestors from Egypt to Sinai and the gift of Torah, another journey of 50 days.

We maintain the nightly ritual of counting, even though we no longer have the sheaves of barley, not the Temple to which to bring them, nor are we retracing their steps through the wilderness of Sinai. The period between Pesach and Shavuot though does give us the opportunity for our own journeys.

This period gives us the chance to ponder the meaning of freedom and responsibility, to review how much of Judaism we have learned and how much we still would like to know, to check out where we are in our journeys of faith and self-discovery. The act of counting reminds us that we need regular and reliable means to assess our journeys, that our Judaism isn't something that we pick up and put down as the mood strikes us, but something that we make the opportunities to integrate into our daily lives.

During this period of sefirat ha'omer, let us consider where we are in our own personal journeys, what truly counts in our own lives and on what we can be counted on.

## SHAVUOT

Shavuot is a Hebrew word meaning "weeks" and refers to the Jewish festival marking the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. This year, Shavuot begins on Tuesday evening, May 18 and Wednesday morning, May 19. Shavuot, like so many other Jewish holidays began as an ancient agricultural festival, marking the end of the spring barley harvest and the beginning of the summer wheat harvest. Shavuot was distinguished in ancient times by bringing crop offerings to the Temple in Jerusalem.

Shavuot, also known as the Festival of the Giving of the Torah, dates from biblical times, and helps to explain the holiday's name, "Weeks." The Torah tells us it took precisely forty-nine days for our ancestors to travel from Egypt to the foot of Mount Sinai (the same number of days as the Counting of the Omer ) where they were to receive the Torah. Thus, Leviticus 23:21 commands: "And you shall proclaim that day (the fiftieth day) to be a holy convocation?" The name Shavuot, "Weeks," then symbolizes the completion of a seven-week journey.

Special customs on Shavuot are the reading of the Book of Ruth, which reminds us that we too can find a continual source of blessing in our tradition. Another tradition includes staying up all night to study Torah, a custom called *Tikkun Leil Shavuot*, which symbolizes our commitment to the Torah, and that we are always ready and awake to receive the Torah. Traditionally, dairy dishes are served on this holiday to symbolize the sweetness of the Torah, as well as the "land of milk and

honey".

Our celebration of Shavuot will include services on Tuesday night, May 18, at 7:00 pm and Shavuot morning services on Wednesday, May 19, at 9:00 am. Yizkor will be recited on Shavuot morning.

## TIKKUN LEIL SHAVUOT

The imagery of Shavuot involves Israel standing at the foot of Mount Sinai, entering into a covenant with God, akin to a marriage between Israel and God or Israel and Torah. We celebrate that event each year with a tikkun leil Shavuot, an evening of study focused on the meaning of Shavuot to each of us.

This year we will utilize a special Shavuot Haggadah which will integrate study as well as celebration with different activities to create a multifaceted approach to the Shavuot. Join us as we eat, share and study Torah immediately following our erev Shavuot service.

## MAZEL TOV

to our

**2010  
High School  
Graduates**

**Ry Garlow  
Maggie Jones  
Nathan Tauger**



**Ed  
Gerson**

Several months ago I was asked to be a candidate for the board 2010-2011. My agreement to do so was conditional: since the president conducts meetings but can't vote, I might do less damage as a president than as a board member. People looked at each other and nodded. Chelm wasn't built in a day. This is my third term as president, which includes 1994-1995 and 2002-2003. Linda Herbst and I will be serving as co-presidents for a while. Linda's knowledge of the administrative operations now in place is invaluable and her input most welcome.

Times have changed and so has our congregation. Does free will have anything to do with it? Let's find out.

In the early 1990's, more young professionals joined our congregation's many founding and longtime members. In the early 2000's we survived 9/11 as well as administrative changes here which our mutual resolve tamed. At the 2002 annual meeting I had to ask this: are there any *adult* children of Israel? That said, it's a blessing to be of service to the Morgantown Jewish community again. So tell us your troubles. A good story perhaps. It's ok. I can't bring myself to vote against your best interests so what's to lose?

Please contact me with any suggestions and let us continue as north central West Virginia's center of Jewish assembly, study, and prayer.

Shalom - Ed

## Second Tree of Life Congregation Forum

The Second Tree of Life "Congregation Forum" or Town Meeting was held March 7, 2010 following the General Congregation Annual Meeting. It began with a meditation by Roz Becker and concluded with a discussion session facilitated by Board members Barry Pally and Al Berrebi. Congregants shared their thoughts, suggestions, wants, needs and concerns regarding all aspects of the Tree of Life Synagogue. Everyone's comments were noted and the results evaluated below. There were 22 suggestions/comments from attending congregants. These fell into 6 general topic areas with most touching multiple topics. Of the comments:

- 42 % suggested ways to increase member participation
- 19 % made suggestions related to providing services to members or congregant public service.
- 16 % made programming related suggestions
- 12 % of suggestions related to rebuilding the synagogue organization such as fully staffing committees
- 5 % related to increasing membership
- 5 % touched on religious matters.

The first forum identified that 32% desired to experience and share a sense of Jewish Community, 28% desired programs to address and enhance their experience, 20% had questions rather than answers, 10% expressed concerns about the lack of young newer people and programs for them, and 6% expressed spiritual interests.

The 42% interest in increasing member participation is consistent with the 32% desire to experience and share a sense of Jewish community. Combined with the 19% related to making suggestions related to providing services and the 28% earlier desire for programs to address their interests and enhance their experience we can better focus our efforts. The next forums can build on these results and explore best ways to move forward with specific strategies and programs. General forums with larger member numbers will add to our perspective. Continuing this dialogue in itself fosters a greater sense of community as we work to make our Tree of Life a better place to meet our individual and collective needs. The results are not surprising but their value is that they come from the membership. They form a starting point. The harder difficult work is ahead of us. Please come to future forums and participate as your time and interests allow. Let us increase our numbers, continue to discuss what is on our minds, what these results mean, and where we go from here. It will take time to rebuild and revitalize with no guarantees. We are blessed with great people. If we want the Tree of Life to prosper and serve our needs everyone will need to pitch in, in their own way.

*Barry Pally and Al Berrebi*



Please join us as

## **Daniel Berrebi**

is called to the Torah on  
**Saturday, June 12 at 10:00 AM.**

A luncheon will follow in the  
Congregation Social Hall downstairs.

You are also welcome to join us for  
Friday evening services on June 11  
with an Oneg following.

Please RSVP to Albert and Denise  
Berrebi at [aberrebi@yahoo.com](mailto:aberrebi@yahoo.com)  
or 304 296-1019.

## **etzheim.org**

Presenting ... the **PHOTO ALBUM** of  
our new website.

We take a lot of photos, only a few of  
which ever make it into the pages of  
our Tree of Life Newsletter. The extras  
now have a home: the **PHOTO AL-**  
**BUM** page on our website. Not only  
do you get to enjoy more photos, but  
they are also in full color. Color for the  
Newsletter is pricy, but free on the  
**WEB**. Some of the albums advance  
automatically. For some you have to  
click to advance. Rolling the mouse  
over the photo shows the caption.

In order to place a photo on the web-  
site, I have to sharply reduce its resolu-  
tion. If you see a photo you would like  
to copy, send me an e-mail identifying  
the picture. Assuming I can still find it,  
I can then send it directly to you with  
full resolution.

*Sylvia Cooper*

## **From Sandy Gutmann**

I want to thank everyone in the  
TOL Congregation for the lovely  
Passover package delivered to  
me. I really appreciate that I have  
been thought of. I am still under-  
going treatment and don't know  
what lies in the future. However, I  
plan on being around for a while.

## **HADASSAH**

It was quite a winter! All our fine  
plans disappeared as the record snows  
came. But, now that the flowers are  
blooming, it is time to think **Spring**  
**Book Brunch** where we share ideas  
for great books we have read this past  
year. Barbara Jacowitz, as usual, will  
be our hostess with the mostest.  
Please join us Sunday, June 13, 2010,  
for fine food, company, pool party and  
books.

Bring a vegetarian dish to share and  
stimulating books you love. We look  
forward to seeing familiar faces and  
meeting new ones!

## **CLERGY HOSPITAL VISITATION**

The law (HIPPA) prohibits The  
Temple and our clergy from  
obtaining clergy sheets and reli-  
gious census information from  
hospitals.

### **We need your help!**

Please notify **Kathy Abate**,  
[xuaf@aol.com](mailto:xuaf@aol.com) co-chair of the  
CARE Committee of any seri-  
ous sickness in your family  
or hospital admissions.

*We note with sorrow  
the passing of*

***Bert Cohen**  
and  
**Florence Berman***

*May their memory be  
as a blessing*

**Share Your Simcha  
Buy a Leaf on**

### **THE SIMCHA TREE**

**\$250/leaf  
\$2500/Small Stone  
\$5000/Large Stone  
Contact**

**Merle Stolzenberg/  
Barbara Jacowitz**

Remember a loved one  
with a  
**Yahrzeit Plaque**  
\$300 DONATION  
Contact: **Bennett Millstone**

## **MI SHEBEIRACH / WELLNESS PRAYERS**

Please remember to consult with those  
who are in need of healing, before pub-  
licly adding their names to the Mi She-  
beirach list. With their permission,  
we would like to add whatever support  
we can to their recovery and healing.



### Beginners

By Denise Levertov

“From too much love of living,  
Hope and desire set free,  
Even the weariest river  
Winds somewhere to the sea--“

But we have only begun  
To love the earth.

We have only begun  
To imagine the fullness of life.

How could we tire of hope?  
-- so much is in bud.

How can desire fail?  
-- we have only begun

to imagine justice and mercy,  
only begun to envision

how it might be  
to live as siblings with beast and  
flower,  
not as oppressors.

Surely our river  
cannot already be hastening  
into the sea of nonbeing?

Surely it cannot  
drag, in the silt,  
all that is innocent?

Not yet, not yet--  
there is too much broken  
that must be mended,

too much hurt we have done to each other  
that cannot yet be forgiven.

We have only begun to know  
the power that is in us if we would join  
our solitudes in the communion of struggle.

So much is unfolding that must  
complete its gesture,

so much is in bud.



Denise Levertov  
(1923 – 1997)

This poem, originally dedicated to the memory of Karen Silkwood and Eliot Gralla, is reprinted here as a tribute to the 40th celebration of Earth Day (April 22, 2010) with the hope it will motivate us to celebrate our relationship with the wonder and beauty of our world.

### RELIGIOUS SCHOOL NEWS

The Religious School year is beginning to wind down. We have observed the holidays of springtime -Pesach, Yom Hashoah and Yom Ha'atzma'ut and in the weeks ahead, will celebrate Shavuot and the first fruits of summer.

Once again we plan to conclude the year with an end of the year picnic. The picnic will start after Religious School on Sunday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>. We will celebrate the learning and sharing that have occurred this year as we look forward to reuniting in the fall.

When we return in the fall, we will have opportunities for interested people to teach or serve as madrichim or aides. If you are interested in teaching or know of someone who is interested in teaching, please contact Rabbi Feder.

### MOTHER'S DAY

Please join the Religious School for a special service honoring all mothers on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 9, at 9:30 am. Religious School classes will spend part of the day focusing on the significance and centrality of mothers in our lives and in our tradition.

### SOUL TRAIN

Einat Kapach, whom many of us have enjoyed in the past, will present a new *Soul*



*Train* program Wednesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm at Tree of Life. She will present movie clips on the topic of the image of the Jew in world drama. The piece is entitled, “*Do Not Look at The Kippah.*” An Oneg will follow her presentation. Mark your calendar to insure you don't miss this chance to enjoy great entertainment and stimulating discussion.

# Purim 'n Passover



Thank you to the **WVU Chapter of HILLEL** for organizing and running the **PURIM CARNIVAL**. Fun was the flavor of the day!

*Photos: Heidi Solomon*



Tree of Life Community Seder  
Monday, March 29, 2010

*Photos: Heidi Solomon*

## CONSECRATION April 2010



Photo: Karen Feder

**MAZEL TOV**  
to  
**Max and Nick**  
and their families.

MAY 2010			
Date	Day	Event	Time
May 1	Saturday	Torah Study	10:00 am
May 2	Sunday	Religious School	9:30 am
May 5	Wednesday	Hebrew School	4:30 pm
		Do Not Look At The Kippah	7:00 pm
		Tot Shabbat	5:45 pm
May 7	Friday	Vegetarian Potluck Dinner	6:30 pm
		Shabbat Evening Service	7:30 pm
May 8	Saturday	Shabbat Nature Experience	10:00 am
		MOTHER'S DAY	
May 9	Sunday	Mother's Day Service	9:30 am
		Religious School	10:00 am
May 12	Wednesday	YOM YERUSHALAYIM	
		Hebrew School	4:30 pm
May 14	Friday	Shabbat Evening Service	7:30 pm
May 15	Saturday	Torah Study	10:00 am
May 16	Sunday	Religious School	9:30 am
May 18	Tuesday	Erev Shavuot Service	7:00 pm
		Tikkun Leil Shavuot	8:00 pm
May 19	Wednesday	Shavuot Morning Service	9:00 am
		NO HEBREW SCHOOL	
May 21	Friday	Shabbat Evening Service	7:30 pm
May 22	Saturday	Shabbat Morning Service	10:00 am
May 23	Sunday	Religious School (Last Day)	9:30 am
May 26	Wednesday	Hebrew School (Last Day)	4:30 pm
May 28	Friday	Shabbat Evening Service	7:30 pm
May 29	Saturday	Shabbat Morning Service	10:00 am
May 31	Monday	MEMORIAL DAY	

JUNE 2010			
Date	Day	Event	Time
June 4	Friday	Coopers Rock Shabbat	6:00 pm
June 5	Saturday	Torah Study	10:00 pm
June 11	Friday	Shabbat Evening Service	7:30 pm
June 12	Saturday	Bar Mitzvah of Daniel Berrebi	10:00 am
June 18	Friday	Shabbat Evening Service	7:30 pm
June 19	Saturday	Torah Study	10:00 am
June 20	Sunday	FATHER'S DAY	
June 25	Friday	Shabbat Evening Service	7:30 pm
June 26	Saturday	Shabbat Morning Service	10:00 am

**Tree of Life Congregation**  
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<http://etzhaim.org>



**FIRST CLASS MAIL**

***Purim Celebrated in Morgantown's Signature Style!***  
*Photos: Ed Gerson*

