

## CONGREGATION BETH AHM OF WEST ESSEX

Serving the communities of Verona • The Caldwells • Glen Ridge •  
 Montclair • The Oranges • Livingston • Cedar Grove • Essex Fells •  
 Fairfield • Roseland • Little Falls and beyond

# *Kol Ha'ahm*

### FROM THE RABBI'S DESK

#### **Pesah, Shavuout and the Arab Spring**

We have witnessed the Arab Spring, and there is something very Jewish about those events. Arab citizens who have lived under cruel, tyrannical dictatorships finally protested. They'd had enough of governments that were based on laws that benefitted only their leaders and too often were harmful to the people at large. In other words, the people of those Middle Eastern dictatorships simply wanted some of the rights that were so evident in countries of the West. Their leaders were not about to grant those rights, To do so would have meant giving up too much of their own power and privileges. So with a little help from Facebook and other computer-age networking , the youth of a number of Middle Eastern countries rebelled.

Their rebellions succeeded in Egypt and in Tunisia. They may prove to be successful in Libya, in Yemen and in Syria; only time will tell. In Bahrain, the rebels have not fared too well. However, in that country, and in others where rebellions have not taken place, the desire for freedom has infected the very souls of the Arab populations. They are experiencing their Pesah. Sadly, Pesah is not enough. The establishment of a free society requires much more than simply overthrowing an existing tyrannical dictatorship. Too often, freedom is short-lived, and is replaced by new tyrannies and dictatorships . Just look at the rest of the world and you see failed revolutions. They are evident in Cuba, in Russia, and in Venezuela just to mention three. There cannot be a successful revolution where the rule of just laws is not accepted equally by the people and by the new leadership of the people. As long as some people remain who are above the law, the results of revolution will continue to be further tyranny and dictatorship.

In order for the Arab Spring to be successful, the people must have more than a Pesah. They need a Shavuout too. For our people Shavuout was the time, which occurred about fifty days after Pesah, when the Torah was received by Moses on Mount Sinai. That Torah held that no man was above the law. That Torah held that the concept of justice was impartial. That Torah taught that all people were equal in the eyes of God and under the law. As a result of the Torah our raggedy bunch of former slaves became unified as a people under the law.

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## **From the Rabbi's Desk**

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The real miracle of our freedom was not the parting of the Red Sea, nor was it in the success of our people in freeing themselves from slavery. The real miracle was the government that was formed by Moses while we trekked the Sinai desert. That government, under the law, allowed us to survive the period of the judges when we were without real leadership. It allowed us to continue as a people for more than a thousand years when we suffered under one bad king after another. And it allowed us to regain our sense of balance even when we suffered under the rule of those who made light of the law.

For the Jews, attaining freedom was only part one of a two-part process. Torah was the second part of that process. It has allowed us to survive longer than any people on the face of the earth. We needed to learn to be a people under the law to complete that process.

Many Arab countries celebrated their Pesah. They too need Shavuot to complete the process which they began with revolution.

## **JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER / CONGREGATION BETH AHM ALUMNI**

Our 75th anniversary has given us much to celebrate. So many members from near and far have contacted us, shared their wonderful memories of precious times at Congregation Beth Ahm and the "JCC" and rekindled a relationship that had lain dormant for years. But dormant is far from gone and now that we've become reacquainted, we don't want to lose you. Please consider becoming an alumni member of Congregation Beth Ahm in order to remain an active part of our family. Alumni members need to have been a previous member or religious school student at Beth Ahm and live outside of a 50-mile radius of the synagogue. This membership category will entitle you to synagogue mailings, yahrzeit notifications and reduced High Holiday tickets. An alumni membership at Beth Ahm is \$200 annually. Please contact us at 973-239-0754 or [office@bethahm.org](mailto:office@bethahm.org) and we will forward you a membership application.

Now that we've reconnected, let's not lose touch.

**We are back to summer hours for Friday night Shabbat Services.  
Services will begin at 8 pm during the months of June, July and August.**

**FROM THE PRESIDENT**  
**DEAN GORDON**

**WE MUST HAVE DONE SOMETHING RIGHT**

At a recent Shabbat devoted to Teacher Appreciation Day, Dr. Monroe Weller was in the congregation, along with his wife Naomi, a retired Verona teacher who taught Rabbi Kriegel in the eighth grade. Monroe is in great shape and, just to have some fun, the Rabbi asked the children who were present how old they thought Monroe was. Some said 70 or 75, one said 80, and the highest guess was 84. Well, most of us know that Monroe celebrated his 100th birthday just a few months ago (we share a birthday, but he's got a couple of years on me). At that same service the Bachenheimer family was present—Barry, Stacey, their daughter Lea and their youngest, Brett, who is five years old. That means that within our congregation we have an age span of 95 years. I'm not writing this as an entry for the Guinness Book of Records or Ripley's Believe It Or Not. I point it out because I think it says something about our synagogue.

In a little over a week, our 75th Anniversary Celebration will culminate with our Annual Affair and we look forward to it for several reasons. One is to welcome many members who have moved away and who are returning for this extraordinary event. We may take it for granted, but not all synagogues last this long; many merge, or simply close their doors because their membership rolls have shrunk to unsustainable levels. Yet here we are, able to gather generations of members at our upcoming dinner. If you've been reading any of the letters written by the men and women who were here in the early days, you will have read of the special place the Jewish Community Center of Verona and then Beth Ahm had in their lives. It was a place they came to worship, to learn, to teach, to play, to organize community activities, to try their hand at theatrics, to share the joy of growing families and to share the grief of losing loved ones. And those letters had a warm glow, not just of nostalgia, but of love for a place that was central to their lives.

And so I am brought back to the 95-year span between Monroe Weller and Brett Bachenheimer. They, and all the generations that sit between them, are here because Congregation Beth Ahm continues to fill a place in their lives. Brett seems to have a blast whenever we see him at shul and the Wellers often honor us at Shabbat. Brett is learning at our first-rate Children's Learning Center and the Wellers find our services inviting and stimulating. We are, and have been, offering something very special not only for the very young or for the older members, but for all those who lie within that 95-year range. That's quite a span of needs to satisfy. But we do. And if you look at the lives of many of our alumni and the success they have achieved in their lives, you have to conclude that during all those years that we have been serving our community, we must have been doing something right. Through our activities, we nourished our membership with what they needed and helped our children to grow into happy, well-adjusted, successful adults. Maybe there are other, more important responsibilities than shaping the next generation to be moral, ethical Jews who carry with them a love of their religion: I just can't think of any.

And on June 13th, the day after the Annual Affair, we will continue our work, ensuring that current members of Congregation Beth Ahm hold to the values that have been passed down to us. We are custodians of a tradition of learning, faith and service, caretakers of a candle whose flame must be nurtured. It is our responsibility to make sure that for decades to come, the Jews in our area find this synagogue as meaningful as it has been for generations gone by.

## BOARD BITS

### ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING, MAY 17, 2011

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 8:12 PM. 23 MEMBERS ATTENDED. 4 PROXIES WERE REGISTERED. (list available on request)

D'VAR TORAH (RABBI KRIEGEL)- "If these walls could talk, what stories they'd tell" is a quote from a sermon by Rabbi Alter Kriegel. That was a rhetorical question until recently. With the advent of our 75th anniversary, stories have been coming out from far and wide. People have read about us on the internet and had memories which they were moved to send to us--with donations! This place is a home. People have come out of the woodwork to attest to this. FDR said "If you wish something and work for it, it is no dream." This is happening here!

OPENING (DEAN GORDON)- This meeting will have 3 parts: the BUDGET; the ELECTION; the FUTURE.

BUDGET- (ROBIN SEIDON, DEBBIE LAWRENCE)- By our constitution we are obligated to present a balanced budget. To accomplish that we had to do some wishful thinking which shows up in the area of CONTRIBUTIONS. About 30,000 of the contributions listed are hoped for--they are not in keeping with contributions of recent years, especially of last year. This year will probably not be a problem--the 75th anniversary makes it unique as a year in which additional revenue is generated. But then comes the next year, and the next... More than anything we need new members. We need to get people in the door so they, too, know that we have a great rabbi, a great cantor and a great congregation.

General discussion toward clarification followed.

MOVE TO ACCEPT THE BUDGET WAS MADE BY MICKEE LUBLANG AND SECONDED BY ETHER SOBEL.

THE BUDGET WAS ACCEPTED UNANIMOUSLY.

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## CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

**Aaron Kriegel, Rabbi / Marsha Schreier, Cantor**

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dean Gordon ~ President  
Kevin Buckley ~ Immediate Past President  
Debbie Lawrence ~ Vice President, Membership  
Laurie Brandt ~ Vice President, Education  
Robin Seidon ~ Treasurer  
Marla Kapner ~ Board Secretary  
Natalie Weiss ~ Cemetery Chair  
Lisa Shapiro ~ Education Chair  
Scott Perry ~ House Chair  
Marcia Paisner ~ Kiddushim Chair  
Jan Einhorn & Ritz Zuccaro ~ Kitchen Co-Chairs  
Irwin and Cookie Hoffer ~ Museum Committee Chair  
Adam Radzik ~ Program Chair  
Carol Beinish ~ Publicity Chair  
Jerry Diamon ~ Ritual Chair  
Mickee Lublang ~ Women's League President  
Jerry Diamond ~ Men's Club President  
TRUSTEES: Barry Bachenheimer, Carol Cathey, Marcia Paisner, Ellen Patterson, Hilda Weissman, Rita Zuccaro

### OFFICE STAFF

Emer Featherstone	Bookkeeper
Joe Chmielewski	Custodians
Judy Maher	

### BULLETIN

Debbie Dretel Lawrence	Editor
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### **Tikkun Leil Shavuot**

Join our friends from Temple Ner Tamid, Congregation Shomrei Emunah, and B'nai Keshet for the annual Shavuot Study Program. Featured key note speaker: Rabbi Rachel Cowan, who will speak about spiritual journeys.

**June 7th at 7:30 pm**

Temple Sholom of West Essex  
760 Pompton Ave. Cedar Grove

**Shavuot Service at Temple Sholom**

**Tues. June 8, 5:00 am**

**Shavuot Services at Beth Ahm**

**Wed. June 9, 9:45 am (Yizkor at 10:30 am)**

## PLAN AHEAD—TAKE THE BURDEN OFF YOUR LOVED ONES

Congregation Beth Ahm owns numerous plots in **King Solomon/West Ridgelawn Cemetery**. These burial plots are located in the **Joshua** and **Jermiah** sections of the cemetery (near the office).

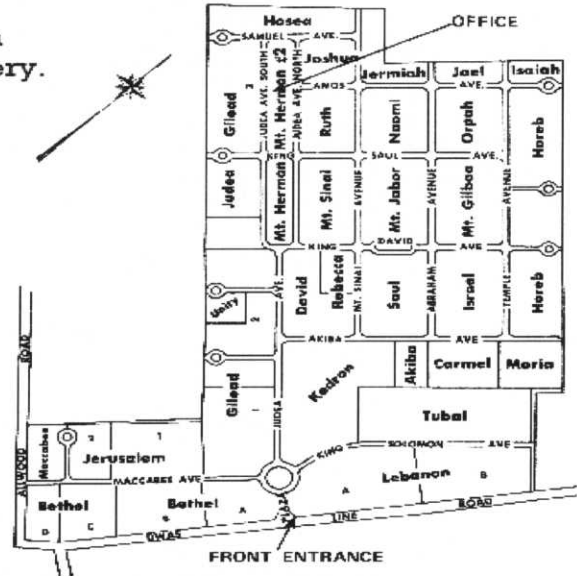
We offer these plots at a reasonable and fair rate of \$750.00 each.

Beth Ahm also accepts donations of plots that can be claimed as a charitable donation on your 2011 tax returns.

Two advertisements found recently in local papers:

**WEST RIDGELAWN CEMETERY, NJ**  
7 graves w/ perpetual care. Will divide. 10 min GW Bridge. Under beautiful tree w/ bench. \$1350 each.

**KING SOLOMON MEMORIAL PARK, Clifton, N.J.** Two Burial Plots For Sale \$1400 Each.



## WEST RIDGELAWN CEMETERY

(King Solomon Memorial Park Section)

Dwas Line and Allwood Roads • Clifton, NJ 07014 -- off Route 3, near Tick Tock Diner

Call Congregation Beth Ahm at 973-239-0754 or email: [office@bethahm.org](mailto:office@bethahm.org)

(Board Bits Continued from page 4)

ELECTION- (DEAN GORDON, DEBBIE LAWRENCE, ELLEN PATTERSON)- Slate of people to be newly elected was presented as being MARLA KAPNER (SECRETARY), BARRY BACHENHEIMER (TRUSTEE), ELLEN PATTERSON (TRUSTEE).

THE NEW BOARD WAS ACCEPTED UNANIMOUSLY.

Thanks for service extended to Hilda Jaffe and Natalie Weiss.

Natalie Weiss will take over Cemetery Chair, Jerry Diamond will take over as Ritual Chair, Scott Perry will serve as House Chair, Lisa Shapiro will be Chairperson of Education, Carol Beinish will chair Publicity.

FUTURE (AND OTHER MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS)

\*WEST ORANGE COOPERATIVE YESHIVA OF CONGREGATION BETH AHM will be opening in the fall for grades k and 1. The participant families will be associate school

members of CBA, and pay dues accordingly. As noted by Kevin Buckley, with Montclair Jewish Workshop, this school, and our Jewish Children's Learning Center all here, we are probably the only synagogue anywhere to have a Conservative, a Reform and an Orthodox school all under one roof!

\*we need a **GRANT WRITER**-- anyone who is available or who knows someone who might be qualified and interested should call the office

\*especially around the annual affair, there is a GOOD FEELING over all about this place--the hearts of many people are here!

\*TZEDEKAH BOX should be in a more prevalent place and should definitely be out for collection of suggested voluntary contributions for events like lectures.

\*our effectiveness in the community, and the community's POSITIVE AWARENESS of us, is more than most of us realize. Meeting was concluded at 9:14 pm

