

The Current

“The VOICE over many waters ...” Psalm 29

MAYIM RABIM

 מַיִם רַבִּים

 CONGREGATION



Tevet/Shevat 5775

January 2015



Reflections on January 1

REFLECTIONS ON JANUARY 1

by Rabbi Sharon Stiefel

Happy New Year! As Jews, we wish each other this greeting on Rosh Hashanah . . . and on January 1. On Rosh Hashanah we have an entire prayer book, the machzor, dedicated to this calendrical event. For January 1, the Reconstructionist prayer book Kol Haneshamah has one reading on page 815! Surely the weight of Rosh Hashanah is greater than the weight of January 1. But what is the significance of January 1 for us?

Definitely, the origins are far from Jewish. In the majority Christian tradition Jesus was born on December 25. Eight days later there was a bris, a circumcision. January 1 became the Feast of Circumcision in the Church. On top of that, I have discovered that throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods, January 1 was a day of anti-Jewish activities: synagogue and book burnings, public tortures, and simple murder.

If as a Jew I am not celebrating the birth of Jesus, why would I celebrate his circumcision? Or a day in history when Jews were persecuted? Shall I become the scrooge who spoils New Year's Day?

New Year's Day has seems to have lost its religious focus, much more than December 25 has. Most would not make a Christian connection to January 1. In fact, earlier pagan roots of the holiday speak of a Roman god, Janus, who was the god of gates, doors, and beginnings.

When I celebrate New Year's on January 1, I bring my Jewish sensitivities to the holiday. I am thankful to the Almighty for bringing me to another day, another year. That's reason enough for me to clink "L'chaim!"

I am appreciative of another opportunity in the rhythm of the year to take stock of my life and, to use a GPS metaphor, "re-calculate." It's always helpful to have the support of the surrounding culture encouraging healthy change of habits.

I am appreciative of how we can move the hope for change from a personal level to a communal, national and global level. There is a renewed sense of tikkun olam, the repair of the world, which gets ignited at this time of year. And giving tzedakah in the form of making year-end-contributions is always a Jewish act.

The origins of January 1 have faded. The opportunity of January 1 as another time for reflection and celebration is waiting. Carpe diem! Seize the day!

Wishing you a healthy and happy 2015!



Ritual and Programming Schedule



All events are held at 4401 York Avenue South in Minneapolis (Friends Meeting House) unless otherwise noted.

Saturday, January 3

9:00 AM – Noon

Emi Stiefel Alperin Bat Mitzvah
Beth Jacob Congregation, Mendota Heights
Shabbat morning service followed by luncheon

Friday, January 9

6:15 – 7:30 PM

Kabbalat Shabbat (welcoming the Sabbath) service led by Rabbi Stiefel and congregants
Kiddush and dairy vegetarian potluck dinner will follow the service.

Sunday, January 11

2:30 – 3:30 PM

Larry Kivens memorial celebration

Sunday, January 18

4:00 -5:30 PM

Study session led by Rabbi Stiefel
Reconstructing prayer – praying as a Reconstructionist

Saturday, January 24

9:30 AM – Noon

Shabbat morning services led by Rabbi Stiefel and congregants followed by dairy vegetarian potluck lunch
Torah Portion: Parshat Bo, (Enter!)
Children's educational programming at 10:00 AM
Childcare is provided

Sunday, January 25

4:00 – 5:30 PM

Mayim Rabim Book Group
And Prairie Dogs Weren't Kosher
At the home of Martha Baxter, email office@mayimrabim.org for directions

Friday, February 6

6:15 – 7:30 PM

Kabbalat Shabbat (welcoming the Sabbath) Services led by Rabbi Stiefel and congregants followed by potluck dairy vegetarian Shabbat dinner and Tu B'Shevat seder.

Sunday, February 8

2:00 – 4:00 PM

Annual meeting of the congregation

Saturday, February 21

9:30 AM – Noon

Shabbat morning services led by Rabbi Stiefel and congregants, followed by dairy vegetarian potluck lunch

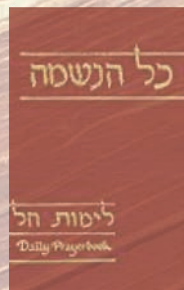
Saturday, February 21

7:00 – 9:00 PM

Game Night



Larry Kivens, a founding member of Mayim Rabim, passed away 12/12/14, of early-onset Alzheimers. Larry served in many capacities for the congregation, as congregant, treasurer, board member, and on strategic planning and search committees. He studied architecture and journalism, worked as a writer and editor, and in midlife became a psychologist. After working at Neighborhood Involvement Program and Regions Behavioral Health, he co-founded the Mental Health Collective (now Watercourse Counseling Center), and taught at Argosy University. Larry was also a founder of Beyt Gvurah, a Twin Cities gay and lesbian chavurah. He was always the incisive observer, with wit, even as his disease progressed. His quiet but insightful steady presence will be missed. A memorial celebration will be held on Sunday January 11, 2:30-3:30 PM, at the Friends Meeting House. Refreshments will be served.



**Reconstructing prayer –
Praying as a
Reconstructionist**

**Study session led by Rabbi Stiefel
Sunday, January 18, 4:00 PM**

Reflecting Reconstructionist ideas, our prayer book makes small changes in the language of some of the traditional prayers to reflect the movement’s values. In this session, we will highlight the whats, whys and hows of these changes and have an opportunity to weigh in on whether they reflect out current sensitivities.

Donations/Acknowledgements

General Fund

- Morris & Natalie Fisher
- Ina and Larry Gravitz,
in loving memory of Ina’s uncle Mordy Feuer
- Dave & Ellie Kopperl
- Deborah & David Tabert
- Denise Tennen

If you would like to make a contribution, send it to Mayim Rabim Congregation, 2751 Hennepin Ave S, Suite 236, Minneapolis, MN 55408. You can also donate online through PayPal on our website: www.mayimrabim.org

**High Holiday
Donations** Lynn Liberman
&
Elizabeth Barnard



MAYIM RABIM FUNDRAISER A GREAT SUCCESS – THANKS TO ALL!

On Saturday night, November 22nd, over 50 people gathered at the Meeting House for our Talent Show and Silent Auction fundraiser. "It was a super fun evening; I didn't know we had such talent in our midst," said one attendee. "I found many items to bid on at the auction."

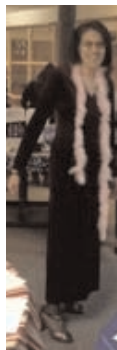
This event would not have been possible without the generous donations of many who contributed time, expertise and support, musical and artistic talent, goods, and food. Most of all, it wouldn't have been a success without the many who attended.

Thank you to our talent, including Marc Lamm, our Emcee and Talent Show producer. Participants included, Jim Miller (alto flute); Ken Granle (opera); Isaac Kaufman (guitar and voice); Suzanne and Felix Abrams (violin), and Marc Lamm and Josie Winship (guitar, mandolin and voice). Let's not forget the "MR Players" who feted us with a hilarious skit written by Marc Lamm: Rabbi Stiefel, Isaac Kaufman, Jerri Pumroy, Jim Miller, Marc Lamm and Sandra Levine.

A Special Thank You to: Marc Lamm - Emcee and Talent(ed) Show Host; Elaine Frankowski and Sandra Levine – Auction Gurus; Dana Fox – Behind-the-scenes Genie



FUNDRAISER



And a good time was had by all!



THANK YOU TO OUR AUCTION DONORS

Community Businesses:

Please patronize these businesses and thank them for their donations.

American Jewish World, Barbette, Bibelot, Brave New Workshop, Breadsmith, Bryant Lake Bowl, Bunker Beach Water Park, Common Roots Café, ComedySportz Twin Cities, D'Amico Restaurants, Edina Grill, Galactic Pizza, Great Harvest Bakery, Great River Tai Chi, Haskell's, The Wine People!, Illusion Theater, Isles Bun & Coffee, Jungle Theatre, Kowalski's Market, Mall of America, Minnesota Jewish Theatre Company, Minnesota Twins, Minnesota Vikings, Music Box Theatre, Nash Frame Design, Padelford Riverboats, Park Tavern Bowling, Rick Bronson's House of Comedy, Riverview Theatre, Roller Garden, Science Museum of MN, Sebastian Joe's Ice Cream, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, St. Paul Saints, Stevie Ray's Comedy Club, Surdyk's, TAGs Gymnastics, The Malt Shop, Three Rivers Park District, Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus, Walker Art Center, Wild Rumpus, Wuollet Bakery

Individual Donors:

Amy Lange, Anonymous (2), Carolyn Belle, Celia Gershenson, Dana Fox, Denise Pasmanter, Denise Tennen, Elaine Frankowski, Larry Gravitz, Pat Levine, Robin Brown, Roz Baker, Sandra Levine



The Mayim Rabim Book Inquiry Group (MR. BIG) has scheduled
our first book discussion for 2015.

Sunday, January 25, 2015, 4:00 PM
at the home of Martha Baxter

(contact office@mayimrabim.org for address if you don't have the directory)



**"And Prairie Dogs Weren't Kosher: Jewish women in the Upper Midwest
since 1855" by Linda Mack Schloff**

Much of what these women experienced was what Jewish immigrant women experienced throughout the country - establishing homes and adjusting their religious practice to new circumstances, but this book interestingly and ably demonstrates the particularly unique experiences of the Jewish women of the north Midwest.

The first chapter covers life in the old country - why Jewish immigrants left in the first place and why they traveled to the upper Midwest; the second deals with what they found when they arrived and how they initially managed. The next four chapters are about establishing life and community by looking at four areas: domestic life, women and work, women and the synagogue, and women and organizations.

There is a lot to learn here about Jewish immigration to and settlement in the Midwest. Schloff talks about the poverty and the precarious lives Jewish immigrants were fleeing, only to find themselves struggling with versions of those same problems in America. Immigrants were often lured to the Midwest to relatives and former neighbors who had already settled there. One reason for this was the Homestead Act of 1862 which awarded free plots of land to those who came out and claimed them. Others arrived in cities like Fargo, Duluth, Minneapolis and St. Paul because Jewish immigration agencies like the Industrial Removal Office promoted settlement in areas other than on the crowded East Coast.

Please join us as we learn about how the Jewish community of the Twin Cities and the upper midwest grew and developed. We will recognize many of the synagogues and people mentioned in this history.





GET READY FOR ...

Sunday, January 11
Noon - 2:30 pm
Hosted by:
Temple of Aaron
616 S. Mississippi River Blvd., St. Paul



The featured vendor is Milt's Barbeque for the Perplexed from Chicago. Other vendors include Baldinger Bakery, Bogart's Doughnut Co., Spirit of Asia, Sholom Catering, Rishi Tea, Rita's Ice, Nothing Bundt Cakes, Just Truffles, Vitalis, Chabad UMN and more. Enjoy Kosher food from around the Twin Cities and beyond all in one location.

Cost is \$15 for adults or \$10 for children 10 and younger, and includes one sandwich from Milt's, two small tastings from participating vendors and a beverage. Additional food will be for sale from vendors. Attendees can choose from meat, parve, dairy or vegetarian.

Classes will be offered from 12:15-2:30 PM about issues surrounding Kosher food as well as a "Think Tank" session about expanding Kosher food options in the Twin Cities. There also will be food activities for children. For more information, call 651-698-8874 or go to www.templeofaaron.org.



THE ISRAEL CENTER OF THE MINNEAPOLIS JEWISH FEDERATION PRESENTS

CULTURE BLVD IV

AN EXPLORATION OF ISRAELI CULTURE THROUGH ART

SEEING FACES with Hanoch Piven

Sunday, January 18, 7:30 PM

Sabes JCC

Tickets: \$12 in advance, \$14 on same day

The colorful and witty illustrations of Israeli illustrator Hanoch Piven have appeared in magazines and newspapers such as Time, Newsweek, Rolling Stone, and The London Times. Piven communicates through fun and playfulness by reinventing the meaning of regular objects and by inviting active viewer participation. Hanoch will also be leading an all ages, hands-on workshop from 1:00-3:00 PM that will teach participants to experience the world visually in a new and exciting way, without judgment or fear. Fee includes all supplies.

Twin Cities Jewish Book Series

St. Paul JCC (1375 St. Paul Ave.)

Tuesday, January 6, 7:30 PM

Thomas Beller, author of "J.D. Salinger: Escape Artist" - the first biography to make a case for the central role of Jewishness in Salinger's childhood.

Thursday, January 22, 7:30 PM

Annabelle Gurwitch, actress and New York Times bestselling author of "See You Made an Effort" bravely turns an unflinching eye towards the many issues people can look forward to in their middle years.

Twin Cities Jewish Humor Festival,

January 17-31

Sabes JCC

Features a variety of comedians, film, a Ladies Night cosponsored by J-Pride, and even a Rabbi.

See <http://www.sabesjcc.org/whats-happening.php> for details



Ritualwell Wins Prestigious Slingshot Award

Hailed as “innovative and impactful,” Ritualwell.org has been selected for the 2014-15 edition of *Slingshot, A Resource Guide to Jewish Innovation*. The guide compiles the most inspiring, innovative Jewish organizations in North America. Ritualwell, a vibrant online community that grew out of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, invites you to connect with prayers, readings, videos and music for every moment of your life.

See <http://www.ritualwell.org>.



New “Guide to Jewish Practice: The Life Cycle” Completes Historically Important Reconstructionist Series on Jewish Life

Rabbi David Teutsch, Ph.D., released the final volume of the three-part book series, *A Guide to Jewish Practice*, on December 15, 2014. Spanning 14 years and drawing from 92 authors and commentators, the series tackles the expansive realm of Jewish practice from a Reconstructionist perspective. Volume 3, *A Guide to Jewish Practice: The Life Cycle*, deals with those moments when life “cracks open,” when identities shift and we face our deepest hopes and fears. Available from <http://stores.jewishreconbooks.org>.



the florence melton school
of adult jewish learning

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Beyond Borders: The History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Mondays, 6:30-8:30 PM, from Jan. 5- April 6 2015 (15 Sessions)

Location: Shir Tikvah Congregation

Israeli Literature As a Window to Israeli Society

Wednesdays, 10:00-11:30 AM, from April 1 – June 3 (10 Sessions)

Location: Sabes JCC

For more information, contact Sara Lynn Newberger sara.lynn@ttsp.org



MAYIM RABIM CONGREGATION is affiliated with the Jewish Reconstructionist movement (www.jewishrecon.org). We are an urban Jewish community that comprises people of diverse ages, abilities, sexual orientations, cultural backgrounds, and financial resources. It is our mission to create and sustain spaces that enhance the practice of Judaism in the contemporary world; to that end, we are a house of prayer, of study, and tikkun olam (the repair of the world). As Reconstructionists, we view Judaism as an evolving religious civilization and claim a shared heritage with all Jews. Our synagogue is governed by an elected board of directors:

Marc Lamm, President
Denise Pasmanter, Vice President
Celia Gershenson, Vice President, Ritual Affairs
Sandra Levine, Treasurer
Helen Romanishan, Secretary
Sydne Westorff, Chair, Tikkun Olam
Larry Gravitz, Member At-Large
Jeremy Fisher, President Emeritus
Sharon Stiefel, Rabbi
Dana Fox, Congregational Administrator
Committee Chairs: Isaac Kaufman, Membership; Jerri Pumroy, House; Barbara Nordstrom-Loeb, Ritual Co-Chair
Dana Fox, Finance Co-Chair

Need information about Mayim Rabim?
Want to know times and places of events?

Website: www.mayimrabim.org

Email: office@mayimrabim.org

Phone: 612-247-5490

Unless otherwise noted, events are held at the
Friends Meeting House,

4401 York Ave. S, Minneapolis

Mailing Address:

2751 Hennepin Ave. S, #236, Mpls, MN 55408



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