

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN by Bert Chessin

## The Seasons of Our Community

Many of us experience life's demands with questions as to the meaning of a given day, event, or long-term commitment and we struggle to find the rhythm and harmonies of our passing days. The arc of the Jewish calendar can be a bridge between the peaks and valleys of family, community, work, recreation, and seasonal swings of energy, weather, and biological change and creation. Har Shalom is one of the spheres of influence in the Venn diagram of our Western Montana lives.

We have a communal calendar that reflects nodes of activity and periods of quiescence. Open to creative contributions from each and every congregant and interested community partners, Har Shalom continues to grow and create connections between individuals, families, and community. The strength of these connections, in my eyes, bodes well for the future. Look around and read this newsletter; I think you will agree that we are inching our way to a fuller and healthier congregation.

High Holidays were a big success and we can anticipate interesting and satisfying ritual and social and educational programs over the next few months. In addition to a successful launch of Atidaynu, there are programs that are meeting broad interests among Har Shalomers and the Missoula community; Hebrew lessons and study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, for example.

I just returned from the annual MAJCO Shabbaton and a couple of items may also be of interest. Shefa Gold will be in Bozeman November 9-11. She is an amazing Spiritual Master and I encourage everyone to visit the Beth Shalom website, bethshalombozeman.org, to find out more. Rabbis Ed Stafman of Bozeman and Barbara Block of Billings offer an array of classes that we will try to make available to other Montana congregations through the use of technology. We are also working on additional programs after the first of the year. Stay tuned.

As the snows begin to fly, find a little extra warmth in programs and people that are outlined in the calendar and articles in this newsletter.

LAURIE'S LETTER by Laurie Franklin, Student Rabbi and Spiritual Leader

## Acharei HaChagim, aka After the Holidays

In Israel, people use the expression, "*acharei hachagim*", that is, "after the holidays" to refer to all the things they simply can't do until Selichot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot and Simchat Torah run their course. Har Shalom's busy lay leaders—*Yasher Koach* (may their strength increase!)—know from experience that the High Holidays and the fall celebrations are both rewarding and demanding! Because of the intense flurry of holidays within a four-week period, the calendar is particularly irregular, and every workweek is broken up for the observances. It certainly gets our attention, and no doubt, it was designed to do that!

Now, as we settle into the quiet time between the fall holidays and Chanukah, we return to our day-to-day activities and apply the lessons we might have learned during the High Holy Days. I was not aware of this rhythm of the Jewish calendar until I became more observant of the holidays. I've learned that the calendar is a tool for us, an aid that makes it possible for us to live thoughtfully and make choices that turn us toward fulfilling our ideals.

This season is the time to reinforce through our actions what we learned during the holidays. For example, here's what's happening to me *acharei hachagim*: I am endlessly thankful

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## Atidaynu\* News

by Sheehan Rosen

\*Atidaynu means "our future."

Atidaynu is off to a great start! Several new children joined us for our first meeting and some of the classes were full enough to split. Preschoolers and kindergartners will be meeting with Anna Kalm and Jeb Rosen to learn about the Holidays, Shabbat, Torah stories and beginning Hebrew. Sheehan's class of six and seven year olds will be focusing on mitzvot, family history, and Jewish people around the world. Eight to ten year olds will be working with Jody on developing a deeper understanding of Jewish Holidays and each child's sense of Jewish identity. And Jeff will be teaching modern Jewish history to the kids aged eleven and up.

This year we will be assigning more homework for Hebrew. Whether the children are using the URJ curriculum called Mitkadem or another curriculum, it is important that they continue to study at home. At this point, we have several small groups of children at similar levels of proficiency and we are encouraging them to work together. Parents and volunteers are more than welcome to join us during the last 30 minutes of the day to help the older children with reading; that is where we are stretched the thinnest and need the most help. Please let me know if you would like to help or if you have something you would like to share. I can be reached at rosens@montana.com.



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The Har Shalom newsletter is written entirely by volunteers. Submissions are always welcome.

Next deadline: December 17 for Jan/Feb '13 Issue

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## LAURIE'S LETTER *(continued from first page)*

for my family, my Har Shalom community and my friends, so I try to keep in touch, both to enjoy and support them (yes, it's a challenge because of the distance, time difference, and my 10- to 14-hour work days). I am learning to structure my time better so I can study more effectively. I am involved in my local (Israel) community in activities that create community, and advance knowledge. Settling into a day-to-day routine allows me to follow through on these commitments to self and community. I'm beginning to feel like I'm getting something done!

So, how's it going for you? How are your days developing as we move into the quiet time of our Jewish calendar? Are you giving yourself time and guidance to be the person you want to be? Please write to me at [laurief@har-shalom.org](mailto:laurief@har-shalom.org) if you want to share your thoughts.

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THOUGHTS by *Rabbi David Whiman*

## Is It Good to Give Thanks?

This is a season of National Thanksgiving—a time when we express our collective appreciation for the gifts and the blessings that are ours; so all this month contributions to food pantries and soup kitchens will quadruple. Social service agencies will report a surplus of volunteers, and charitable solicitations are more likely to get a favorable response. It's a mellow, happy time—a time when we are most likely to be moved by the wants and the needs of others.

I have a friend who is a Chassidic Jew with a somewhat tentative embrace of the secular world, so in an attempt to be sensitive I asked my friend, "Aaron, do I wish you a Happy Thanksgiving?" He replied, "Why not? By us every day is thanksgiving." And of course he was right. For us, every day is or ought to be Thanksgiving.

The Psalmist wrote: It is good to give thanks to the Lord. To proclaim God's steadfast love at daybreak, God's faithfulness each night. Yes, there is considerable value in setting aside one day each year specifically to acknowledge our blessings, but the greater challenge is to set aside some portion of each day to express gratitude for that which we are privileged to enjoy. And that is not an easy thing to do.

Appreciation. Gratitude. Thanksgiving. These are not automatic endowments. Appreciation is something that has to be learned. And appreciation is hard because gratitude is an all-encompassing orientation towards life. Nonetheless the Psalmist wrote: It is good to give thanks to the Lord. A gracious God does not require our thanks. It is in God's nature to bless and to bestow. Still, the Psalmist says it is good for us to give thanks to the Lord. But why is it good? And notice that it is not required, compulsory or obligatory to give thanks. No, according to the Psalmist it is good, proper, fitting, advantageous to give thanks. And there is benefit. So what is that benefit? Why is it good to give thanks to the Lord?

A friend told me that when she was a teenager she used to pull her hair back and wear it in a tight pony tail. Her mother would look at her disapprovingly and say "Who do you think you are, Grace Kelly?" And if she was ever mean spirited or destructive her mother would ask her, "Who do you think you are Attila the Hun?" And whenever her actions turned self-indulgent or her attitude entitled her mother would quip, "Who do you think you are, the King of Siam?"

At the shores of the Red Sea, saved from Pharaoh's Army, the people of Israel sang, "Who is like you O Lord?" A rhetorical question, if I ever heard one. But the correct answer would be something like—certainly not you or me. You and I are neither the King of Siam nor the King of Kings, the Holy and Blessed One. And given that fact, there isn't a whole lot in life that comes to us by right. And that awareness, that perspective can lead us to an appreciation of what we do have. Why is it good to give thanks? Because thanksgiving is the best antidote to entitlement.

In Judaism, every *Baruch atah Adonai*, each blessing we say acknowledges a divine gift. Such formulaic blessings are a form of religious consciousness raising. They are a way to never allow the world to become so familiar to us that we take it for granted. It is the way to keep ourselves focused, to train ourselves to pause and acknowledge the many small and overlooked blessings that are ours to enjoy. And the Rabbis taught that a person who enjoys anything in the Lord's world without giving thanks, without saying a blessing is like a robber who steals from the king's treasury. Prayers of thanksgiving are an invitation to never let the world become so familiar that it will escape our notice, or that we ignore it, or that we fail to see how richly blessed we are.

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## Oh Chanukah!

Mark your calendar and join us for the annual Har Shalom Chanukah party, Sunday, December 9th. Rabbi Whiman will be here, Bob Marshall is heading up the latke crew, and as always there will be dreidels, music, stories and crafts. Maeta Kaplan and Ed Rosenberg are coordinating and need lots of help so contact Maeta at [maetak.danw@gmail.com](mailto:maetak.danw@gmail.com) or 543-4322 to see what you can do.

The party begins about noon, right after Atidaynu that day, and should wrap up about 4 p.m. Latkes, apple sauce and brisket will be provided. If you can add to the meal, bring a side dish, salad or dessert. Even though it won't be dark, bring your menorah and candles and we'll enjoy the ritual together.

For those who have a little extra to share this year, we encourage you to bring either non-perishable food, a new game, suitable to be played by a family, or a book for a family to share, to donate to the C.S. Porter Middle School family holiday boxes. The school collects food donations and thus needy families will receive a box of food and a game to enjoy together over the winter break.

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## Har Shalom Schedule: All-day, drop-in Shabbat

Har Shalom is growing! Because of increased attendance and interest, we're instituting an all-day, drop-in Shabbat from Torah Study to Havdalah. It's scheduled for the first Saturday of each month. Stop by and see what we're doing.

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|-------|---|
| 10 am | Torah Study   |
| 11 am | Torah Service (led by Holly Kingsford and Bert Chessin on November 3rd)   |
| 12:30 | Pot luck lunch and community hang out time —bring a dairy/veggie casserole, salad, bread, dessert or juice to share |
| 2 pm  | Kids' story time  |
| 4 pm  | Adult Meditation  |
| 5 pm  | Havdalah  |

Torah Study will always be at 10 am every Saturday, regardless of whether there is a Torah Service the same morning. And the last Friday of the month (usually) will be pot luck dinners at the shul, inviting everyone to stay longer and enjoy a community meal together.

Yes, it is good to give thanks to the Lord because gratitude is the fertile ground in which compassion, charity, perspective, and yes, happiness can grow. May this season inspire us to a deeper more profound sense of appreciation so that by us, by our children and by all who are touched by our acts of caring and compassion—by all of us; every day will be a day of Thanksgiving.

## A Mitzvah Indeed

Jewish law details 613 Mitzvot that an observant Jew is commanded to perform. Among them is tzedakah, the giving of charity. In modern usage the word Mitzvah has come to mean, for many, performing a good deed, and so the lines of translation begin to blur. For Har Shalom we have established an ad hoc group we are calling “Caring Community,” in order to respond to the needs of our community members, as well as to celebrate life events. We hope that everyone will join the list and participate; so here’s how it will work.

Maeta Kaplan has agreed to be the “Keeper of the List.” She’ll collect a list of names of people willing to perform mitzvot for others. When there is a need, someone (either the person in need or someone on their behalf) will contact Maeta. She’ll call whoever is next on the list and ask them to handle the request. If that person can’t do it, they’ll try to find someone else who can.

What will we do? Here’s the start of our list: cards and/or small gifts for life events, birth, death, illness on behalf of Har Shalom; provide meals (chicken soup anyone?) during times of illness or emergency; hospital or nursing home visits.

If you’d like to help, please email Maeta [maetak.danw@gmail.com](mailto:maetak.danw@gmail.com), or call her at 543-4322 and get your name on our growing list. She’ll need your email, phone number and permission to share it with others in the Mitzvah Corps.

The other way to help is to keep your ears open. When you sense a need contact Maeta or any of the board members who’ll pass the word along and try to get the need met. From those of us who have already begun this process let me assure you that the blessing goes both ways. The sense of reward and fulfillment is far greater than each person’s individual investment, so won’t you join?

## Record-Setting High Holiday Food Drive

Between our High Holiday Food Drive and donations made over the summer, Har Shalom contributed almost 270 pounds of food (and a check) to the Missoula Food Bank this fall. Our High Holiday Food Drive comes at a particularly crucial time for the Food Bank – shelves are looking a little bare at the end of the summer and for many Missoula area residents making holiday contributions to the Food Bank is still several months away. Many thanks from the Food Bank, and its clients, for our community’s generosity. A donation bin for the Missoula Food Bank is in the lobby of Har Shalom year round; donations are welcome at any time.

## Organize this year’s Holiday Food Bank Drive

For the past many years, Har Shalom members have filled another important need at the Missoula Food Bank—we have filled a shift close to the Christmas Holiday. For some Har Shalom members, this has become somewhat of an annual “holiday tradition,” and for others it is a one-time thing. All volunteers have agreed on one thing—it’s been a lot of fun. The volunteers who have organized this “work party” in the past are unavailable this year, so if you are someone who would like to make this tradition happen this year, please contact Robin Abeshaus at 542-7535, who will put you in touch with the volunteer coordinator at the Missoula Food Bank.

## Todah Rabah (thank you so much)

To our Lay Service Leaders: **Maeta Kaplan, Holly Kingsford, Dave Jolles, Bert Chessin, Kate Soukonnikov and Laura Winston.** To **Joyce Latimer** for opening the shul for Torah Study at 10 am Saturdays and for taking on the Har Shalom greeting/welcome card writing. To **Barb Gross** for keeping the shul clean and the plants watered. To **Ed Rosenberg, Dave Jolles and Bert Chessin** for putting up the sukkah, organizing the pot luck and leading the Shavuot service. To **Holly Kingsford** for teaching Hebrew and **Toba Winston** for teaching Dead Sea Scrolls classes. To **Maeta Kaplan** for beginning a new Caring Community group and organizing the dinner brigade. To **Robin Abeshaus**

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## Yahrzeits

*The Yahrzeit is the Hebrew-calendar anniversary of a loved one’s death. The Hebrew date is invariant and is computed on the basis of the day and time of the deceased’s passing, but the corresponding civil calendar date changes each year.*

*In the list below, the Hebrew date appears listed first, followed by the current year’s civil date in parentheses. Yahrzeit candles are traditionally lit the evening before the specified date because the Jewish day begins at sunset of the previous day. At Har Shalom, we read our congregants’ Yahrzeits and recite the Mourner’s Kaddish at the Shabbat service before the Hebrew calendar Yahrzeit date.*

*If you would like to add a Yahrzeit to the Har Shalom list, please contact our office at 549-9595 or email [info@har-shalom.org](mailto:info@har-shalom.org).*

### CHESHVAN

17 ( November 2 ) Max Marshall  
Connie Campbell’s father

25 ( November 10 ) Donald S. Brown  
Ed Brown’s father

29 ( November 14 ) Jacob Cohen  
Jack Cohen’s grandfather

### KISLEV

3 ( November 17 ) Harry Arthur Saroff  
Steve Saroff’s father

8 ( November 22 ) Joseph Cohen  
Jack Cohen’s father

14 ( November 28 ) Cherrie Steinebach  
Tyler Steinebach’s mother

15 ( November 29 ) Mildred Shulman  
Joy Earls’ mother

18 ( December 2 ) Bill Weisz  
George Weisz’s father

19 ( December 3 ) Barbara Lumpkin  
Candy Miller’s mother

24 ( December 8 ) Morris Leibowitz  
Gary Leibowitz’s father

### TEVET

1 ( December 14 ) Jonathan Kast  
Sigurn Kuefner’s son

4 ( December 17 ) Fanny Rosenberg  
Ed Rosenberg’s mother

12 ( December 25 ) Anna Glass  
Fern Glass-Boyd’s mother

13 ( December 26 ) Bert Genstel  
Robbin Kusia’s father

18 ( December 31 ) Doris Rosenberg  
Ed Rosenberg’s sister



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## Donations and Tributes

We are grateful to our current and past contributors. Every donation, regardless of size, is deeply appreciated. Making tributes and memorials is a wonderful way to honor someone and support the Jewish community.

To make a donation, pay membership dues or religious school fees, visit us online at [har-shalom.org](http://har-shalom.org) and click on the "NEW: Make secure credit card payments here" link. Or, use your bank's FREE "Bill Pay" feature. Or mail your payment to Har Shalom at PO Box 3715, Missoula 59806. Please specify the intention of your donation: Memorial; Honor; Membership; Capital Campaign; school, camp, or special event fee. If you use a credit card, please consider adding 2% to your donation to cover our credit card fees.

### General Donations

Howard and Helen  
Hammerman  
Holly and Paul Kingsford  
Miriam and Gary Wolf  
David Zucker

### Honors and Memorials

Toby Gerber—in memory of Jean Orloff  
Madelyn and Marc Semanoff—in memory of Jean Orloff

### High Holy Days Donations

Marlie Ave  
Joyce Latimer

### Capital Campaign Donations

Joy and Mark Earls  
Jeff Kooris



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## Todah Rabah (cont'd)

for keeping the flow of food going from Har Shalom to the Missoula Food Bank and to all the Food Bank contributors over the High Holy Days.

To the people who made the High Holy Days happen: **Rabbi David Whiman and Bert Chessin** (adult service leaders), **Jessica Weltman and Jeff Bendremer** (children's service leaders), **Marc Steinberg** (airplane tickets for the Rabbi and meditation leading), shofar blowers **Emily Darling, Bert Chessin and Elliott Oppenheim** (shofar and trumpet). **Katie Kopp** for piano music. Singers **Ron Willcot, Kathleen Holt, Amanda Ceaser, Lee Kirkegaard** and pianist **Nita Smith. Maeta Kaplan** for the break the fast, **Toba Winston and Kate Soukonnikov**, greeters. Torah readers **Nat Levtow and Matt Semanoff. Dave Jolles and Erin Craney** for beautifying the shul for High Holidays; flowers, grass cutting, trimming bushes. **Joyce Latimer and Claudia** for setting out High Holidays prayer books. **Bert Chessin and Sam Rosenbaum, Sam Rotenberg, and Asher Krell** for Simhat Torah music. **Asher Krell** for videography. And to **the students from Hillel** for helping out in so many ways. To **Lolo Hot Springs** for providing their "living waters" as a mikveh for conversions.

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## Mazel Tov

Congratulations to **Lisa Carter** on her conversion in September!



P.O. Box 3715, Missoula, MT 59806

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