

## ***Returning to the Land of the Living***

Rabbi Edward S. Boraz

Some individuals can project their thoughts into the future. Unfortunately, this is a skill that I lack. My *Connection* article for September (when Rosh Hashanah is nearing) is due this Friday. I am in Poland, finally ready to return home after Project Preservation restoration in Lutowiska, Poland, followed by a series of meetings with officials in Warsaw to discuss the possibility of working in partnership for future journeys that I hope will involve the broader community.

As I write, the time is 6:40 AM, July 25<sup>th</sup>; I ask myself two questions: What have I learned on this experience? What can I share that would be meaningful to the people I serve?

There is a common phrase found on the headstones here; it's a phrase found on headstones of both men and women: "Here lies buried a person who walked on the path of the upright." I am struck by the repeated emphasis on morality that adorns the memory of our people buried in these cemeteries that adorn the land of Poland.

When I juxtapose this simple phrase against the reality of the Shoah, against life itself, it is clear to me that this is no easy task, nor do I believe it was used in any sense as a cliché. To "walk in the path of the upright" is extraordinarily difficult. Doing so requires a constant effort of thought, reflection, study, and psychic balance.

An insight that arises when discussing humans' inhumanity to each other is that those who have done evil often do not think they are engaged in evil, but rather honestly and sincerely believe that they are doing the right thing. Even in the midst of a crime as heinous as the Shoah, the vast majority of Germans and their leadership believed that exterminating all Jews was the right thing to do.

Events, circumstances, reflections, crises, all pointed to a cause of Germany's problem. When you read interviews of former officials, even those who worked at Auschwitz, it seemed to them that their actions were justified because they were serving a higher cause. The death of at least 6,000,000 Jews, through shooting, starvation and gassing, at that time seemed righteous. For a deeper discussion of this phenomenon, please read *Auschwitz: A New History* by Laurence Reese; this book is required reading for participants in Project Preservation.

Knowing this turns my stomach, first because I believe that our faith teaches that every human being is entitled to life. It is beyond rational understanding, that from 1933 through 1945 in Germany among the educated population, there was no one in a position of real authority who stopped to think on the inhumanity of the country's direction.

I suggest that while the concept of following a moral path seems simple on the surface, it is not an easy accomplishment in the reality of day-to-day living. Anyone who has ever raised a child, taught in a school, faced a moral dilemma of some kind, been seriously ill, or faced any of many other life crises, understands this difficulty. I would wager that you who are reading this sentence who have undergone one or another of the above experiences, know in your heart exactly what I am talking about. No one has gone through life unscathed. Still, reading about the German people's role and attitude in the Shoah is revolting to the core of any human heart.

What, then, is a possible lesson? I would suggest that one's life requires ongoing study, and that moral teachings of our tradition offer a pathway on which to live that offers meaning, structure, and a civilized manner in which to treat one another. Of course, life's reality is intricate and every bit as difficult as understanding Talmud, Midrash, or other commentaries on one of the many narratives of the Torah. There is simply more at

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stake in life itself than there is in the study of life; yet, the latter may help us in the former.

Learning, study, and prayer (a form of reflection, an expression of humility) are the ways I know that can help us to live a moral and upright life. Living such a life is at the heart of the best we can do for ourselves, our children, and the generations that will follow. May we be worthy, so that when our time has come, we too will be thought of as human beings who walked on the path of the upright, not that life was simple or easy, but rather that our choices made both ourselves and those whose lives we touched, better in some measure.

Shannah Tovah (though today is only July 25, 2014).

P.S.: The new year will be 5775; or written in Hebrew: תשע"ה.

**Kiddush Schedule**

August- September 2014/ 5774 Av-Elul/5775 Tishrei

August 2	Maggie Duford
August 9	Diane Roston
August 16	Dianne and Gary Levine
August 23	Betty Lauer
August 30	Bonnie Kimmelman
September 6	Susan and Mark Israel
September 13	Sharon and Bob Racusin
September 20	Jamielynn Garland
September 27	Sheryl Lerner



**Order your LULAV and ETROG for the first day of  
Sukkot: October 9!**

Please contact Carole Clarke (603-646-0460) no later than Friday, September 19, if you would like to order a lulav and etrog set for Sukkot services.  
The cost is \$46.00 per set.

## Note from UVJC President Deb Kaplan

As the summer comes rapidly to a close, the UVJC is very busy preparing for the start of the school year and the High Holidays. The act of *teshuvah*, a central theme from Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur, requires a thoughtful process of examining our behaviors over the past year and considering about how to “live better” in the coming year. For Jews, “living” is always within the context of “community.” As you contemplate the upcoming year, please think about your place in the UVJC community and how you support it.

Your financial commitment is of utmost importance to the survival of the UVJC. Over the past five years, we have increased the number and variety of services available not only to our UVJC and the Hillel community, but to the entire Upper Valley community and beyond. These additional services have resulted in an increased financial burden to the UVJC. For example, the response to reform services on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur has been extremely positive and well attended, and the Board of Trustees is committed to continuing them.

Every year, UVJC members receive a special letter containing the High Holidays appeal. Past responses to this request frankly have been dismal. The following chart shows the percentage of participation in the High Holiday Appeal by year:

2013	45 member donations	22.5%
2012	54 member donations	27%
2011	53 member donations	26.5%
2010	52 member donations	26%
2009	46 member donations	23%

Thank you to those members who have consistently supported the Appeal over the years.

This year, the Board of Trustees would like to focus on having 100% of the membership participate in the High Holiday Appeal, whose slogan is “*Chai for the High Holidays*.”

We are asking all members to make a donation of *Chai* (the Hebrew letters stand for the number “18”) or a multiple of *Chai*, in response to the High Holiday Appeal. We hope that members will give based on their ability, while acknowledging that it is important for all to participate with some level of financial commitment. The High Holiday Appeal closely follows the UVJC annual membership renewal. We are happy to accept your tax-deductible gift any time of the year.

The Board of Trustees plans to address non-members whom we welcome to High Holiday services with a more direct campaign than in years past asking for their contributions. Rather than distributing donation packets randomly on seats at services, non-members will be greeted and handed an appeal card and informative brochure. You will also hear a direct appeal at each service.

Thank you in advance for making our “*Chai for the High Holidays*” drive the success we know it will be this year. The entire Board of Trustees wish you and your loved ones *Shanah Tova* and a sweet 5775.

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## Volunteer to Sponsor a Shabbat morning Kiddush

Responsibility to prepare our weekly Shabbat *kiddush* is rotated among UVJC volunteers who attend services. Preparing *kiddush* for the congregation is a great way to celebrate a birthday, graduation, wedding anniversary, or to commemorate a loved one's *yahrzeit*. It's also an opportunity to get together with old friends and make new ones.

For those unfamiliar with the tradition of Shabbat morning *kiddush*, it is the time following the service when we gather over wine, grape juice, challah and other goodies. But most of all, we come together to enjoy Shabbat with good fellowship.

Wine, grape juice, paper goods and cups are supplied by the UVJC. The weekly *kiddush* volunteer supplies the challah. One may add to the fare if one wishes. For example, herring, gefilte fish, cheese, cookies, coffee cake, sweet rolls, pretzels, or fruit make nice additions to the *kiddush* table.

If you have questions, or would like to sponsor a *kiddush*, please contact Yoni Neirman who may be reached evenings at 802-649-3234, or by email at [Yoni.Stevens.Neirman@hitchcock.org](mailto:Yoni.Stevens.Neirman@hitchcock.org).

### *Yahrzeit Memorial Plaques*

*Jan Smernoff-O'Donnell and family in loving memory of  
her mother,  
Beverly "Betty" Smernoff*

### *Yahrzeit Reminders*

Reminders of these important dates are mailed each month to members who have provided *yahrzeit* information. If you would like to receive a reminder of a loved one's *yahrzeit*, please contact Carole Clarke at 603-646-0460 or email [uvjc@valley.net](mailto:uvjc@valley.net).

### *Yahrzeit Board Remembrance*

The act of remembrance in Jewish tradition is a profound experience. Remembrance brings to present consciousness the influence, love, and nurturing that the departed brought to us, our children, and our children's children.

The Upper Valley Jewish Community is fortunate to have received a generous donation to purchase the *yahrzeit* board now installed in the Alperin Sanctuary at the Roth Center for Jewish Life at Dartmouth College. The board provides each member of our congregational family an opportunity to engage in the profound mitzvah of remembrance by acquiring a *yahrzeit* plaque invoking the memory of loved ones. On the anniversary of the *yahrzeit* (the date of death), a light is illuminated adjacent to the deceased's name.

If you are interested in acquiring a *yahrzeit* plaque, please contact Carole Clarke at 603-646-0460 or at [uvjc@valley.net](mailto:uvjc@valley.net).

*The beginning is nigh!*  
Education Director, Maggie Duford

As you read this, summer will be winding down, the High Holidays are near, and our children will be returning once again to Hebrew School. I miss them very much in the summer months, but I use this time to make sure everything is in place for their return.

In the summer, I focus on enrollment, grade placement, special needs and other tasks unseen as I work away downstairs, but all integral to the operation of our school. At least one major facet of my vision for our school has been realized as I begin my fourth year of service: for our children to experience Hebrew school not only socially, but on a true academic level.

A wonderful experience lies ahead as members of our school families and I work together to plan the year, especially how the festivals and holidays may be shared together as a school family. Beyond the festivals and holidays, last year much "family education" was taking place around scheduled *Shabbatot*, where children and parents attend morning services in trade for a Sunday school session. These were so well attended that we are planning to have 6 of these *Shabbatot* during the upcoming school year.

Behrman House Online Learning Center will be an integral part of Hebrew language learning for grades 2-5. Last year everyone was just becoming acquainted with it, so I anticipate this year will run smoother than last. Parents are supportive of this additional form of learning that's not meant to replace the classroom, but rather to enhance what is taught in the classroom through homework exercises on a secure site including games and reading practice.

This year the children can also look forward to choosing electives again, as we did two years ago. We hope to provide a *trope* class for those students who wish to learn how to chant Torah at a proficient level. Other classes on the proposed list of electives will be Modern Hebrew, Art and Judaism, Junior Choir and discussion-based classes dealing with "hot topics" that affect Modern Jewry.

All of the above is really only nuts and bolts, the inner workings of the Hebrew School Machine. The true significance of our school is driven by each and every child who comes through our doors to share his or her *neschama* (soul) with the staff of dedicated teachers who yearn to support each child as s/he grows into his/her own Jewish identity. I cannot think of a single thing more important than the gift of our children, which brings our school to life.

See you kids at the Roth Center on September 14, promptly at 10:00 AM!

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## Donations

### ***Yahrzeit Contribution***

**Maggie Duford** in loving memory of her son, Chris Davidson

**Harriet and Rick Fingerth** in memory of Harriet's father, Samuel Rifkin

**Lynn and Gary Schwartz** in memory of Lynn's parents, Benjamin and Ellen Farkas and Gary's father, Irving Schwartz

**Gene Kadish and Karen Fryer** in memory of Gene's father, Milton Kadish

**Susan and Mark Israel** in memory of Susan's brother, Edwin Lustgarten

**Harvey and Jane Greenberg** in memory of Jane's mother, Muriel Woods

**Peter and Marjorie Aptakin** in memory of Peter's mother, Jenny Aptakin

**Walter and Eleanor Angoff** in memory of Eleanor's father, Dudley Weiss

**Steven Woloshin and Lisa Schwartz** in memory of Lisa's grandfather, Phillip Teitcher

**Aaron and Deb Kaplan** in memory of Aaron's mother, Sarane Rosenberg Kaplan

**Gary and Dianne Levine** in memory of Gary's father, Jacob Levine and his grandmother, Anna Rosenberg

**Carolyn Gordon** in memory of her parents, David Gordon and Esther Toovy

**Jim and Mimi Weinstein** in memory of their daughter, Brianna Weinstein and Jim's father, Sheldon Weinstein

**Aila Conarck** in memory of her son, Cliff Conarck, her father, Irving Yanover, and her mother-in-law, Pauline Conarck

**Michael Humphrey** in memory of his mother, Dorothy Humphrey

**Gloria and Syd Finkelstein** in memory of Syd's father, Joseph Finkelstein

**Bruce Pacht** in memory of his uncle, Leon Oringher

### ***UVJC General Fund***

**Gloria and Syd Finkelstein** in memory of Les Chosed's mother, Gertrude Chosed

**Jim and Mimi Weinstein** in honor of Estelle Diamond's birthday

**Ellis and Ginny Rolett** in honor of Rebecca Gottesman, recipient of this year's Mishpachah Award

**Paul and Sue Etkind** in memory of Bonnie Kimmelman's father, Bernard Kimmelman

**Paul and Sue Etkind** in honor of Rabbi and Shari Boraz on becoming first-time grandparents

**Richard and Bayle Drubel** in memory of Les Chosed's mother, Gertrude Chosed

**Brad Arrick and Danielle Jones** in honor of their son, Ryan's Bar Mitzvah

**Rusty Sachs** in honor of Betty Lauer

**Rusty Sachs** in honor of the Stotland Family

**Jill and John Schiffman**

**Rich Abel and Roberta Berner** in honor of Rabbi and Shari's Boraz's new grandson, Owen Asher Boraz

**Sara Rubin and David Montanari** in memory of Adele R. Greenberg

**Bayle and Richard Drubel** in memory of Flo Dmitrovsky's mother, Thelma Witkowski

### ***UVJC Endowment Fund***

**Jeremy Katz**

### ***School Programming Fund***

**Gloria and Syd Finkelstein** in honor of Ari Brown's graduation from University of Michigan

**Gloria and Syd Finkelstein** in honor of Rainie Kaplan's graduation from Hanover High School

**Yoni and Stephen Neirman** in honor of Rebecca Gottesman, recipient of this year's Mishpachah Award

**Yoni and Stephen Neirman** in honor of Barbara Brown, recipient of 2014 Shem Tov Award

**Gloria and Syd Finkelstein** in honor of Sydney Silbert's graduation from Hanover High School

### ***Rabbi's Discretionary Fund***

**Arline and Barry Rotman** in memory of Barry's father, Murray Rotman

**Milton and Rhonda Weinstein** in honor of their new grandson, Levi Theodor Weinstein

**Alan and Rhonda Siegel** in honor of their daughter, Leora becoming a Bat Mitzvah

## Donations Continued

### **Cemetery Fund**

**Barbara Brown and family** in memory of Barbara's father-in-law, Daniel H. Brown

### **Torah Restoration Fund**

**Stephen and Yoni Neirman** in memory of Stephen's father, Robert Neirman

### **Hebrew High School Fund**

**William and Edna Silverman**

## Donation Funds

There are many opportunities for you to designate a gift to the UVJC. Please give generously throughout the year. Please make your check payable to either "UVJC" or "Upper Valley Jewish Community," noting the name of the fund on the memo line.

Donations may be directed to the **UVJC General Fund** or specifically to one of the following funds:

- **Adult Education Fund:** To support guest speakers and other special adult programs
- **Beautification Fund:** To be used toward furnishings, decorations, and ornamentation to enhance the Roth Center for Jewish Life.
- **Cemetery Fund:** To help with landscaping and maintenance of the UVJC cemetery.
- **Endowment:** Contributions of cash or securities, payable to the UVJC Endowment Fund. Interest will be used to support the activities of the community.
- **Library Fund:** For purchase of books and/or other library materials.
- **Rabbi's Discretionary Fund:** For charitable purposes as determined by the Rabbi.
- **Religious School Scholarship Fund:** To provide scholarships for deserving religious school students.
- **School Programming Fund:** To support special programs over and above the curriculum.
- **Teen Programming:** To provide support for young adults in our community to participate in Jewish programs.

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## Upper Valley Jewish Community Cemetery

The Upper Valley Jewish Community owns and maintains its own cemetery for your comfort and service in times of need.

We encourage you to think today about your future needs.

Plot locations may be selected, and information you want family members to have may be recorded informally at a time when there is not a present need.

Inquires about the cemetery or plot acquisition may be directed to Carole Clarke at 603-646-0460.



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## LITERATURE LOVERS

We are an enthusiastic reading group who love to discuss books proposed by group members. We welcome new participants.

Come join us!

~ ~ ~ Here are the books selected for discussion ~ ~ ~

Sunday, August 31

*THERE ARE JEWS IN MY HOUSE* by Lara Vapnyar

*There Are Jews in My House* is the first collection of stories by Lara Vapnyar (a young Russian emigrée who has since published another story collection as well as two novels). While the title story takes place during World War II, most of the other tales occur in Russia of the more recent past. Another story, like much of her more recent writing, is set among Russian emigrés in the U.S. Vapnyar's writing tends to be humorous on the surface, but her insights with regard to the human condition lend an underlying wistfulness and occasional sadness to the stories.

Literature Lovers usually meets at 7:00 PM the last Sunday of the month, unless otherwise noted. For location or more information, please contact Susan Cohen at (603) 643-3611, or [sncohen037@gmail.com](mailto:sncohen037@gmail.com)

### UVJC FACEBOOK PAGE

Keep up with what is happening at the UVJC today, next week and into the future on Facebook. Please request to join the UVJC page today at <http://www.facebook.com/groups/359003357910/>