

VOICE OF



Kol HaShalom

Elul 5763/Tishrei & Heshvan 5764

September/October 2003

From the Rabbi *Preparing for those Fall Holidays*

What are we supposed to call the Jewish new year anyway?

I was raised with *The High Holy Days*, spoken in a booming, ministerial tone, and always in English. Later I came to know them as *The Days of Awe*, based on the Hebrew Yamim Noraim. I recently heard them called *The Hi Ho's!* If we look closely at the Hebrew Rosh HaShanah, we might read it as *New Turning-Time*.

How do we best prepare for this important time of new turning?

It is taught that the Hebrew letters ELUL (aleph, lamed, vav, lamed) are an acronym for the verse from Shir HaShirim (Song of Songs), Ani L'Dodi V'Dodi Li - I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine. In Elul we celebrate our ability to maintain our independence, individuality, and uniqueness at the same time that we enter into relationships and recommit ourselves to those we love and That Which We Love, the source and substance of love.

In Aramaic (the language spoken by Jews living at the time that the months were given names), the word *Elul* means *search*. Elul is a time to search our hearts. The shofar is sounded daily in the morning, except for Shabbes, and I will do my best to carry on that tradition.

How can we make this time more meaningful?

1) I encourage you to meet with me individually during Elul to seek and clarify your spiritual goals for 5764, the year I will be focusing on as a time for *Receiving the Mystery* since the letters that spell out the number 64 make the word *Sod*: secret, mysterious, foundation, intimate circle...

2) Consider creating a mini-beth din, a spiritual healing place where you meet with trusted friends to reflect on who you have been in the last year and who you want to be in the year to come.

3) Start exploring how you might do a mikveh (a full immersion), either physically or spiritually, to help yourself feel cleansed for the new year.

4) Recite psalm 27 every day from Rosh Hodesh Elul through the middle of Sukkot (in Tishrei). Find a decent version (then write thyn own version). Key themes: finding the light, hope, finding courage, asking for help.

5) Visit the graves of loved ones throughout the month in order to remember and honor those people in your past who inspire you to live more fully in the future.

(For more ideas visit www.ritualwell.org, and see the *Essence of Elul* article)

6) Consider Alex Cullen's beautiful offer to join a Minyan group. See details on page 5.

7) Attend Selichot Service Saturday, September 20, 7 to 9 pm. Selichot (pronounced slee-cho) is a service about letting go, about forgiving ourselves and others, about owning up to the places we need to bring more light, and about preparing our hearts more deeply for the sacred time ahead.

For those who wish to honor this custom, I invite you to my home for any period of time, between 7 and 9 pm on Saturday, September 20.

"This is the meaning of Judaism: To live in a state of sustained wonder. To know that there are things beyond human grasp. That the very existence of anything is beyond all knowing ... and then to strive to know."

—Menchem Mendel Schneerson, the Late Chabad Lubavitch Rebbe



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News from the Board

Board of Directors

David Halperin
President

Marjie Rich
Vice-President

Barry Levine
Treasurer

Pami Sprague
Secretary

Anne Howson
Kate Husband
Alex Cullen

Linda Grossman
Jennifer Lett
Todd Serby
Sandy Swartz

Next Board Meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, October 21** beginning at 5:15 pm at the CAS office. All are welcome to attend.

Directions to Stacie and Karl's house:
Take M-22 north to Suttons Bay. Pass the theater downtown and take the first left on Jefferson Street to the stop sign at St Marys (one block). Turn right on St Marys and go one short block. Our house is on the corner of St Marys and Park Streets, yellow with green shutters, on your left. Please come directly to the yard. (We will not be entertaining in the house for this gathering.)

If we move to the park: M-22 north to Suttons bay, turn left at the yellow flashing light at the south end of town (Broadway Street), go 2 blocks to Lincoln and turn right. Continue straight ahead (even when the road veers right). The road becomes a dirt drive and ends at the Park warming hut.

In January of this year, the CAS Board conducted a member survey to ascertain our strengths and weaknesses as a congregation. Many topics were covered in the survey, including: member programs, children and adult education, Shabbat services, social action activities and basic organizational issues.

A small working group was formed (Alex Cullen, Anne Howson, Kate Husband, and Marjie Rich) to analyze the survey results.

Overall, there was an overwhelmingly positive response to CAS. In general, members like what we do and want more of everything - from adult education to Shabbat services, from social programming to social action. Many respondents commented that Rabbi Stacie has been instrumental in creating and fostering a loving, supportive, and spiritual community for our members. Without her leadership, CAS would be an entirely different entity.

CAS members are very diverse, and this diversity was reflected in a number of the members' responses. When asked specifically about Shabbat services, an equal number of people replied wanting more Hebrew as those wanting less Hebrew. Many members said they want services to incorporate practices from other cultures,

From the Rabbi
continued from page 1

I will tend a fire outdoors (we won't be hosting in the house) during that time - symbolizing the flame that burns inside us with a yearning to be renewed, and reminding us of the selichot offerings of our ancestors. I will be chanting the selichot service and alternating with silence (this is my spiritual practice for the event) and invite you to bring to the fire - in silence - anything you wish to release, anything you feel needs renewing. You can write these things down and place the paper in the fire. Or you may just sit in silence with me for any period of time that feels right. I ask

though there was also a contingent saying they wanted more traditional services. Many members said they wanted more education during services, while others asked to cut out the educational component. While we embrace this diversity among our members, it also poses a very real challenge in trying to address our members' needs.

Communication was the one area of general discontent among members. The board has already taken a number of actions to address this very real concern. Sandy Swartz has agreed to design the CAS newsletter. She brings a great deal of experience and organization to this challenging task. The newsletter will be printed on a regular schedule, with frequent e-mail communications between printings. The newsletter will include a regular column on CAS board activities. In addition, Pami Sprague, the board secretary, will e-mail CAS board meeting minutes to all members.

The CAS survey has already proven to be a very helpful tool in identifying member concerns. More importantly, however, it also gives direction to Rabbi Stacie and the board in decision making and planning our future directions.

Marjie Rich, Vice President

for silence or sacred chanting only at this gathering - it will not be a time to converse or chat externally. Come and know that you will be accepted and honored.

If it is raining heavily we will move to Bahle Park and an indoor fire. See directions at left.

Looking forward to sharing the new turning-time with you.

Blessings—

And PS: Be sure to thank Sandy Swartz and her team for this beautiful newsletter!

Rosh Hodesh

Monthly Gatherings and First Day Long Retreat!

Our Rosh Hodesh gatherings are flourishing. We always seem to have a wonderful mix of women who come, participate and share their gifts. If you have never attended, please feel free to join us. No one is able to come to each and every meeting and we often have more than one new person at a meeting. We meet at 6:30 pm on the evening of the New Moon for socializing and a vegetarian potluck dinner, followed by spiritual time: singing, poems, meditations, conversations, and chants - renewing ourselves every new moon. We are lay led - each woman taking a turn to host and/or lead our program.

Month before last we walked Pami

Sprague's labyrinth and last month we gathered at Marlene Krohner's and had a marvelous conversation about our intuition. Next month we will be at my house in Elk Rapids and will spend some time at the beach having a bit of a mikveh (and maybe a bonfire?).

Please see the calendar to the right and call me to tell me when you can lead a program (I will give you a couple of samples if you like) and/or host our meeting. Pay special attention to our upcoming day-long women's Rosh Hodesh Retreat on the second day of Rosh HaShanah (see page 5). We are blessed to have such a loving and thoughtful women's community; please join us!

—Kate Husband

Into the Sanctuary of the Labyrinth

Last fall and again this summer, our Rosh Hodesh group gathered at the new moon to discover the beauty of an ancient form of walking meditation. In safe and sacred community, we each stepped into the labyrinth with open hearts, some with intent for the walk and some with a desire for silence. We stepped out in a state of gratefulness and with divine integration of body and spirit.

Over the course of the last two years, a seven-circuit Cretan labyrinth (named after the island of Crete, home of the mythical Minotaur) has found its way into the hearts and home (actually, our yard!) of Pami Sprague and Glenn Goodman. The Cretan labyrinth is the oldest and most universal form of the labyrinth, dating back more than 3,500 years.

Not to be confused with a maze (which has a series of dead ends or obstacles), a labyrinth has been used for centuries for prayer, rituals, ceremonies, and personal and spiritual growth. Once you step into

the labyrinth there is no need for concern about finding the "right way". No map or strategy is required, and there are no obstacles to overcome. The way in is the way out. The labyrinth walker is therefore able to take a meditative journey simply by walking, with very little thought for the act. In the silence of the labyrinth, the walker meanders back and forth, turning 180 degrees each time she enters a different circuit. As the direction shifts, so too does awareness shift from right brain to left brain. In the silence and sanctuary of the labyrinth, our foot steps lead us along an ancient path to deeper spirituality, healing and simplicity.

So often our meditation or prayer is in physical stillness. Walking the labyrinth is a way to connect the physical body and the spiritual heart.

We are honored to welcome CAS members to enjoy the silence and sanctuary of our labyrinth. You have only to enter and follow the path.

—Pami Sprague

Rosh Hodesh

Calendar

Wednesday, August 27th
at 6:30 pm in Elk Rapids at
Kate's place.

Sunday, September 28th
from 10 am to 4 pm,
location TBA, First
Women's All Day Retreat

Saturday, October 25th
at 6:30 pm

Monday, November 24th
at 6:30 pm

Wednesday, December 24th
at 6:30 pm

For more information, or to RSVP, offer your leadership or hosting, or simply to kibitz, call Kate Husband at 264-6034, or e-mail at Mairead@chartermi.net.

... a labyrinth has been used for centuries for prayer, rituals, ceremonies, and personal and spiritual growth.

Calendar of Events

The Congregation Ahavat Shalom (CAS) office is located at 413 N. Division, Traverse City. It is just south of Grandview Parkway on the west side of Division Street.

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation (UU) is located at 6726 Center Road, Traverse City. It is on the peninsula, 2 miles north of Munson Avenue (Grandview Pkwy and Garfield) on the east side of Center Road.

Saturday Morning Torah Study Update
Saturday morning Torah study will re-commence on **Saturday, October 18** - Simhat Torah - the day we celebrate the ending of one and beginning of a new cycle of Torah reading! We will review *How to Study Torah* to prepare for this, beginning with Beresheet (Genesis 1:1) the following week. Torah study is held at the office every Saturday (unless otherwise noted) at 10 am. Please bring your own copy of the Torah - any version is welcome - and a nosh to share.

Torah study will not meet November 1.

Sunday School Kick-off Plans for fall 2003
Sunday School are in the works. The kick-off is scheduled for September 21. For further information contact the CAS office or Robin and Jim Bransky at 941-7326 or e-mail at

Rosh Hodesh

Kate Husband will host Rosh Hodesh on **August 27** at 6:30 pm. See page 3 for details.

Elul Begins

On **August 28** we will begin the month of Elul, which precedes the Days of Awe, our new year/new turning-time, Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur.

Bat Mitzvah of Maple Topol

Please join us on **Saturday, September 13** at 10 am at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation, for the bat mitzvah of Maple Topol Kirby, daughter of David Kirby and Martha Topol. Maple will be the first CAS mitzvah student ever to chant her Torah portion. The service is filled with beautiful music in Maple style and is followed by a oneg lunch hosted by Maple's family. Donations to CAS in honor of Maple's achievement will be accepted joyfully!

Selichot Service

On **Saturday, September 20** we will gather for a *Releasing What Ails You/ Forgiveness* Service for Selichot, the last Sabbath before Rosh HaShanah. See page 1 for details.

Rosh HaShanah

Rosh HaShanah services begin on **Friday, September 26** at 7 pm at the UU, and will feature UU music director Kevin Tarsa and violinist Judy Weaver offering a meditation called *The Baal Shem*. Rosh HaShanah celebration will continue **Saturday, September 27** at 10 am at the UU, followed by tashlikh at Bryant Park and lunch out. Please RSVP to the CAS office, 929-4330 for the lunch out. On the second day of Rosh HaShanah, **Sunday, September 28**, we will offer a women's retreat. See page 5 for details.

Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur services take place **Sunday, October 5** at 7 pm and **Monday, October 6** at 10 am, with a day of study and reflection, followed by a break the fast meal. **A coordinator is needed for this meal. Please contact the office if you are willing to undertake this relatively simple but fruitful mitzvah.**

Sukkot

Sukkot begins **Friday, October 10** at sundown. Join us at Barry Levine's for a potluck dinner at 6:30 pm. Last names starting with A-F bring hors d'oeuvres, G-L bring vegetarian main courses, M-R bring salads or sides, S-Z bring desserts. Please bring your own place settings.

Please Note: the UU is not available for services on November 7, 2003, or January 9, 2004, our regularly scheduled service time. **Would you be willing to host us for a home Shabbat?** It's easy and fun. Please call Rabbi Stacie!

Future Service Dates

2003 Dates

November 7 (host home needed)
December 5
December 19 (Hanukkah)

2004 Dates

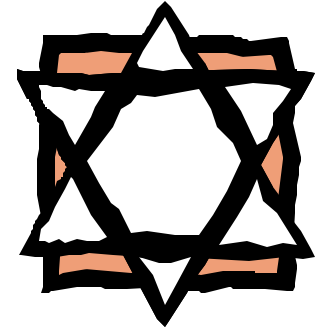
January 9 (host home needed)
February 6
March 5
April 2
May 7
June 4
August 6
September 10
October 1
November 5
December 10 (Hanukkah)
Holiday info will be forthcoming

New Study/Discussion Group Forming!

CAS members and friends are invited to join an informal study/discussion group of Rabbi Rami Shapiro's book, *Minyan: Ten Principles for Living a Life of Integrity*. *Minyan* outlines spiritual practices that can be incorporated into our daily lives and used to deepen our connection with G-d, our community and our world. It also contains an excellent interpretation of the ten commandments. Some members may remember taking the vows of *Minyan* during past High Holiday seasons. Those familiar with the book and newcomers are invited to join this group. Exploring *Minyan* together provides an excellent way to get a

jump start on spiritual preparations for the High Holidays, not to mention the opportunity to familiarize yourself with Rami's work before our upcoming Fall retreat!

Meeting times and location will be decided by group members. Paperback copies of the book are in stock (as of last week) at both Horizon Books and Borders for \$14. Amazon also offers used copies starting at \$7.40. Anyone interested in joining, please contact Alex Cullen at 228-6170 or e-mail at tushsmom@hotmail.com (put *Minyan* in the subject line).



Weekly Torah Portions *Read for the week ending*

September 6
Ki Tetzey
Deuteronomy
21:10-25:19

September 13
Maple's Bat Mitzvah
Ki Tavo
Deuteronomy
26:1-29:8

September 20
Nitzavim/Vayelekh
Deuteronomy
29:9-30:20 & 31:1-30

September 27
Rosh HaShanah
(special portion)

October 4
Hazzinu
Deuteronomy
32:1-52

October 11
Sukkot
(special portion)

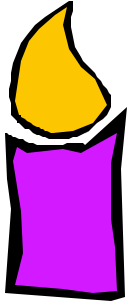
October 18
Simhat Torah
(special portion)

October 25
Beresheet
Genesis
1:1-6:8

Rosh Hodesh Women's Day Retreat: *Rosh HaShanah— the Rosh of all Rosh Hodeshes!*

Please join us as we create our first ever women's all day retreat on Sunday, September 28th from 10 am to 4 pm, the second day of Rosh HaShanah. Our central theme will be *Walking Through the Gate of the New Year*, which will include releasing and completing the past year, spiritually preparing for Yom Kippur and creating our spiritual intentions for the new year to come. We will use the luxury of time to sing, meditate, journal, dance, eat, play and share with one another, all as a means to walk through the gate of the New Year. We **do not** have a location yet (we have been trying to find a site at a resort, etc. but to

no avail) and would welcome any offers or ideas. If you have the perfect place, please call Kate Husband at 264-6034. Our lunch will be an assigned potluck of Rosh HaShanah foods. We will need you to RSVP so you can get your food assignments, etc. Also, if you have something you are drawn to contribute to the program (within the theme) please contact Kate or Rabbi Stacie so we can plan to include it. We look forward to spending the day with you!



"If you will it,
it is no dream."

—Theodore Hertzl

Needed items include:

- ?? new backpacks and duffel bags (all sizes)
- ?? school supplies
- ?? regular sized toiletries
 - toothbrush/paste, hairbrush, shampoo, soap
- ?? all sizes of men's/women's/children's underwear & socks

Happy Birthday, CAS!

Theodore Hertzl said, "If you will it, it is no dream."

It was amazing to me to wake up Sunday, August 3 and realize it was Ahavat Shalom's 6th birthday.

Six years ago, we gathered in my living room to imagine the possibilities of
 ... a vibrant dynamic schul open to everyone in northern Michigan
 ... a place where a broad range of Jewish spiritual practice is recognized and nurtured
 ... a place where our kids could be educated with joy and celebration
 ... an extended family that cares about us
 ... a celebration of our lives, our joys, our sorrows, together
 ... working in the community to inspire justice, peace and love

When we began we could not have imagined the work of the retreat center, the number of families from across the area who would join CAS, the vibrancy of Rosh Hodesh ... and so many wonderful new dreams.

Six years ago, we had the intention; today we have the reality, and now we must dream for the future.

If it is in your heart, you can help us to continue living these dreams and building new ones. Please consider a donation for Ahavat Shalom's promise to continue, to help us build new dreams, and to reach farther than we ever thought we might.

Thank you for a wonderful first six years, and for supporting the dream and promise of Ahavat Shalom. Happy Birthday CAS!

Rabbi Stacie

Fantastic Mitzvah Opportunities at Goodwill Inn!

Our mitzvah partner, the Goodwill Inn Homeless Shelter, has a variety of mitzvah opportunities available. With September just around the corner, the Inn is gearing up for back-to-school with their annual backpack drive. In addition to providing school supplies for the children, their aim is to distribute packs with basic toiletries, socks, and underwear for those in need (see list at left).

The Goodwill Inn also has an ongoing need for all cleaning supplies, paper towels,

Kleenex and dishwasher/laundry detergents.

Stocking up on school supplies for your own kids? Why not add an item or two for the kids at the Inn? Your contribution can make a difference! Bring any items you have to CAS services or events. Group mitzvah projects and volunteer ideas are also available. Please contact Alex Cullen at 228-6170 or e-mail

tushsmom@hotmail.com with questions.

Shalom from the Chesed Committee

In the recent past we have welcomed several new families into our community with meals prepared and delivered by our volunteers. We would like to thank those of you who have been so generous with your time and willingness to help out. We have a core group of support volunteers who have done more than their share since the committee was formed. We hope to see some new faces in our volunteer committee throughout this coming new year.

"How do I join?" you ask. It's so easy! Just contact Alex Cullen or Melody Ward by e-mail or phone to sign up... That's all there is to it. So come help us fulfill this important mitzvah today!

Alex Cullen, 228-6170 (home phone)
 Tushsmom@hotmail.com
 CASChesed@att.net **or**
 Melody Ward, 995-0881 (home phone)
 Stingrhea11@att.net

In Gratitude for Recent Contributions

Contributions in celebration of Jacqueline Emma Jewel's Baby Naming by proud grandparents, Judy and Sheldon Levin and Gerald and Lisa Jewel.

Contribution from Benjamin Reder and Jeanette Magner in celebration of Sander and Harriet Schiff's 50th Wedding Anniversary.

Contributions for Raffi Appel's Bar Mitzvah - Victor & Helen Moss, Curtis & Sandra Kuttner, Glenn Goodman and Pami Sprague, Shirley & Sy Rosenwasser, Beverly Beauchamp, Arthur and Theresa Sherman.

Contribution in memory of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg by Cindy Shapiro.

Many thanks to all of you who have contributed to Ahavat Shalom in the past 2 months:

Jeff Haas and Kate Pearson, Linda Kurtz and Oran Hesterman, Sander and Harriet Schiff, Curtis and Sandra Kuttner, Melody Ward, Robert Carstens, Judy

and Shel Levin, Ellen Fivenson, Glenn Goodman and Pami Sprague, Doug Ferguson and Kate Husband, David Halperin and Carol Schiffman, Greg Stone and Susan Cronander, Rachel Yudin, Sandy and Craig Swartz, Anne and Bill Howson, Marlene Bevan, and John Kuhn and Betty Raschi. Thank you!

Thank you to Rabbi Stacie for her contributions towards computer repair and a lovely dinner for the Rabbi Finman program.

Our monthly budgeted amount for donations and membership dues is \$3,000. Thank you to all who have contributed.

"A halo of wisdom spreads in every direction, enveloping all with love and compassion, joy and equanimity."

—Thich Nhat Hanh

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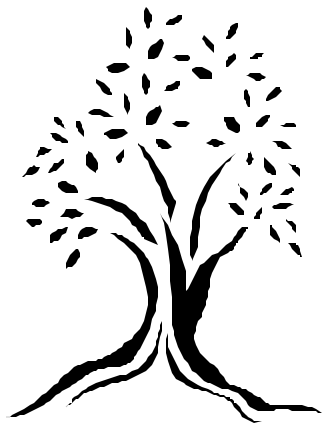
Date _____

Would you like to advertise in our newsletter?
With a donation of \$144 your ad will appear in 6 issues (1 year). Just send a business card to or call the office.

Spacious Heart/Spacious Mind: *A Joyous Jewish Meditation Retreat*

A Weekend with Rabbi Rami Shapiro

October 31 - November 2, 2003



Spacious Heart/Spacious Mind focuses on the kabbalistic Tree of Life as a map of the human soul. Every soul contains ten sephirot or aspects of consciousness, each with its own voice, mission and view of reality. When the Tree functions properly, we are open to and in dialogue with each of the sephirot, creating a sense of balance and harmony among them that allows us to function in the world as a vehicle for compassion and justice. This open and aware state is called *Spacious Heart/Spacious Mind*. Too often, however, our Tree is not functioning properly and we are out of balance. The purpose of the *Spacious Heart/Spacious Mind* program is to teach us simple techniques for regaining balance.

Rabbi Rami Shapiro is an award winning poet and essayist, whose liturgical writings are used in prayer services throughout North America. He has written over a dozen works of poetry, liturgy, short story and nonfiction. Rabbi Shapiro is a graduate of the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion and holds a doctoral degree in religious studies from Union Graduate School. A congregational rabbi for 20 years, Rabbi Shapiro currently directs both the Simply Jewish Foundation and the One River Foundation (www.one-river.org). His most recent books are *Minyan*, *Wisdom of the Jewish Sages*, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, *The Way of Solomon*, and *Hasidic Tales Annotated and Explained* (forthcoming).

For registration information please call

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