

# TZEDEK V'SHALOM

A Reconstructionist Jewish Congregation

*Mercy and truth will meet, justice and peace will embrace.*  
– Psalm 85:11



SEPTEMBER 2011

ELUL 5771/TISHREI 5772

VOLUME 16, ISSUE 1

*From Rabbi Anna Boswell-Levy*

## *Freedom Riders and Us*

On August 24<sup>th</sup>, Tzedek v'Shalom cohosted a fabulous program with Newtown Friends about an act of civil disobedience that kicked off a revolution in this country — the journey of the Freedom Riders.

A little history: Fifty years ago, on May 4, 1961, the first Freedom Ride left Washington, D.C. and was scheduled to arrive in New Orleans on May 17<sup>th</sup>. Thirteen riders (seven black, six white) left Washington, D.C., on Greyhound and Trailways buses. When they arrived in Birmingham, Alabama, they were firebombed and beaten by mobs in attacks organized by Birmingham Police Sergeant Tom Cook (an avid Ku Klux Klan supporter) and police commissioner Bull Connor. Local civil rights activists defied the mob to rescue the injured Freedom Riders.

Despite the violence they suffered already and the threat of more to come, the Freedom Riders desired to continue their journey. However, radio reports gave them pause about the mobs that were waiting for them at future stops, and Greyhound informed them that their drivers were refusing to drive any Freedom Riders anywhere. The Riders agreed that their efforts had already called great attention to the civil rights cause and so they decided to abandon the rest of the Ride.

However, the organizers felt that if violence were allowed to halt the Freedom Rides, the movement would be set back years, and so they pushed to find replacements to resume the ride. On May 17, a new set of riders took a bus to Birmingham where they were arrested by Bull Connor and jailed. These students kept their spirits up in jail by singing freedom songs. Out of frustration, Connor drove them back up to the Tennessee line and dropped them off, stating, “I just couldn’t stand their singing.”

Back to the present: It was these songs, alongside a powerful narrative history, that we were treated to at the screening of the documentary *Soundtrack of a Revolution*. We sang along, cried, and listened with awe as we heard the moving and sometimes heart-wrenching testimony of the living leaders of the civil rights movement.

But for me the most valuable part of that event wasn’t the movie — it was the people we TvSers were seated alongside. There were Friends, of course, but also a diverse gathering of people from faith communities throughout the Newtown area. Our discussion after the film, facilitated by Susan Talia Delone, included

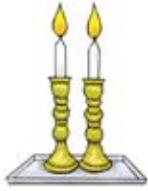
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# September Services and Celebrations



## Friday Night @ TvS Friday, September 9

Friday Night @ TvS in September will feature poems on self-reflection. People can bring in their favorites or write their own for the Maariv section, and Kabbalat Shabbat will be a classic family-friendly service with lots of singing and a short story and discussion about newness and renewal.

- 5:30 p.m. Community set-up for potluck
- 6:00 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat: Welcome in Shabbat with this family-friendly service
- 6:30 p.m. Potluck dinner
- 7:15 p.m. Clean-up shared by all
- 7:30 p.m. Ma'ariv: a more adult-oriented program

Location: Newtown Friends Meeting House (NFMH)  
219 Court St. (off State St.), Newtown, PA

### Shabbat Meditation and Service

- Saturday, September 17
- 9:30 a.m. Meditation
- 10 a.m. Shabbat Service led by  
Rabbi Anna
- Location: NFMH



### Selichot

- Saturday, September 24 @ 7:30 p.m.
- Havdalah followed by the screening of the movie  
*Groundhog Day* & Discussion
- Location: the Gold's home  
1 Eton Road, Yardley, PA 19067  
[agoldn1@aol.com](mailto:agoldn1@aol.com) or 215-295-2028



The **High Holidays** begin on September 28. Please see page 4 for a complete listing.

Complete information about **Sukkot** and **Simchat Torah** will appear in the October newsletter, but the calendar on page 10 will help you "save the date."

צדק ושלום



**Tzedek v'Shalom**

P.O. Box 863

Newtown, PA 18940

(215) 860-0119

<http://tzedekvshalom.org>

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| Anna Boswell-Levy<br>Rabbi and Education Director | 215-287-5128 |
| President: Jerry Manas                            | 215-341-6413 |
| Vice-President: TBA (in negotiation)              |              |
| Secretary: Cindy Weiss Fisher                     | 215-860-0326 |
| Treasurer:  |              |
| Steve Pastor (Finance Chair)                      | 215-702-1880 |
| Education (Committee Co-Chairs)                   |              |
| Marc Bloom  | 267-364-5438 |
| Becky Rice  | 215-504-4247 |
| Fundraising (Committee Chair, open)               |              |
| Membership/Marketing (Committee Co-Chairs)        |              |
| Linda Gold  | 215-741-4571 |
| Bob Abrahamson                                    | 215-968-1956 |
| Shammus Coordinator                               |              |
| Ralph Posmontier                                  | 215-579-2644 |

- |                                  |              |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Spiritual Life (Committee Chair) |              |
| Diane Gold                       | 215-295-2028 |
| Tikkun Olam (Committee Chair)    |              |
| Kina Leitner                     | 215-493-3966 |
| Past Co-Presidents:              |              |
| Wendy Friedman (Fund-raising)    | 215-579-9275 |
| Ruth Jampol                      | 215-860-8903 |
| Noa Kuzma (Fund-raising)         | 215-493-8418 |

Intergenerational Activities/Events/  
Adult Ed (Liaison) - OPEN

Please feel free to contact any member of  
our Board for any additional information.

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|--|--------------|
| Non-Board Committee Chairs and Coordinators: |              |
| Acts of Caring                               |              |
| Debbie Chong                                 | 215-504-9268 |
| Jeannie Ryersbach                            | 215-943-4565 |
| Teen Coordinator                             |              |
| Wendy Friedman                               | 215-579-9275 |
| Webmaster                                    |              |
| Jerry Manas                                  | 215-698-7957 |
| Newsletter Editor: Naomi Mindlin             | 215-757-8921 |

To submit news to the newsletter:  
[email: nsmindlin@photoreview.org](mailto:nsmindlin@photoreview.org)

(Rabbi's column, continued from page 1)  
the perspectives of black people who grew up with segregation and felt they still experienced it in a less officially-sanctioned but just as insidious way, people who were active during the civil rights movement, and younger people (like myself) who have never known a time of revolution and change in our country such as Freedom Summer. We wondered together what would motivate people in this day and age to mobilize such a movement for civil rights in this country, especially as we see it happening across the Arab world and in even Israel today. I also learned something about the interesting racial history of Bucks County — where Blacks were allowed and not allowed to live, and the development of intentionally integrated neighborhoods.

The gathering was organized by a revived local organization called Interracial Harmony, which is a multi-faith, multi-racial group in the Newtown/Yardley area, and they provided a wonderful and unique forum for building community and strengthening ties and trust beyond our own synagogue and between diverse people who live near one another and share common values.

This event was important in all the ways I've expressed, but I should also note that besides meeting with the wonderful organizer, Natalie Kaye, and publicizing the event to our membership, we hardly had to do any work to make the event happen. And let's face it: as a small congregation, we can't do everything ourselves. We need to share events and open up our

community to other groups that share our values — in this case, a commitment to justice and peace.

*Tikkun olam*, repair of the world, is an integral part of our mission at TvS, it's not just something good or fun or community building we like to do. But it can take a lot of planning and effort, and the task seems too large for us alone to accomplish, especially after tackling the basic tasks of synagogue governance and religious school management. But we are driven by values, and if we don't live them fully, we risk losing the inspiration that keeps us going.

There is a saying from the Talmud — "*Lo alecha hamlacha ligmor, v'lo ata ben chorin l'hibatel mimena*" — It is not incumbent upon you to finish the task, but neither are you free to desist from it." We know that we cannot do the important, weighty work of the world alone, and we know that community makes it easier. As a small community, how much more so do we need to reach out further than ourselves!

We are grateful that Kina Leitner has stepped up to chair our Tikkun Olam efforts this year. If you have any ideas for a new project or event, or if you know of certain people or organizations we should be connecting with, please do contact her, or myself (Kina: kina.leitner@gmail.com, Rabbi Anna: rabbianna@gmail.com). We don't need to fix the world, but if we take one good step, it will surely be a blessing for our community and beyond.

L'Shana Tova,  
Rabbi Anna

## Into The Light: A Multifaith Conversation on Faith-Fully Finding Our Way Ten Years After 9/11

A conversation among Muslims, Christians, and Jews,  
on how faith can spark our moral imagination and  
guide us forward in the aftermath of 9/11.

Thursday, September 8 at 7:30 p.m  
at Princeton University, Peyton Hall  
4 Ivy Lane, Princeton, New Jersey 08544  
Call 609-924-6863 to reserve your seat.

**free & open to the public**

For further information, visit [Into the Light](#) online or call 609-924-6863.

## Board News

Our next TvS Board held a retreat this summer and have contacted members for their input and feedback. Look for more information in the October TvS News.

Contact information for the Board is always on page 2 of the newsletter.



## Spiritual Life News

The Spiritual Life Committee generally meets once each month. Right now we are busy at work preparing for the start of a new year. Please call Arnie or me with any questions you may have.

– Diane Gold, Spiritual Life Chair  
[agoldn1@aol.com](mailto:agoldn1@aol.com) or 215-295-2028

## Gabbai Volunteers Needed

In an effort to better organize our Torah services and educate ourselves about how to run a Torah service, Rabbi Anna would like to train a cohort of TvSers on how to be a *gabbai* — a person who calls the aliyot and runs the Torah service. You only need to know how to read Hebrew on a basic level; Hebrew fluency is not required! Due to our informal nature, the role of a *gabbai* at TvS is distinct from what it might be at another shul, so please be in touch with Rabbi Anna ([rabianna@gmail.com](mailto:rabianna@gmail.com) or 215-287-5128) if you are curious about what is involved.

The Spiritual Life committee and Rabbi Anna are also preparing a handbook on the duties of the *gabbai* at TvS. Debbie Chong is already at work preparing cards to be handed out by the *gabbai* to people receiving an *aliyah*. The cards will have a quote about the honor of being called for *aliyah* and choreograph positions and actions.

## Gabbai Training

September 15 @ 7:30 p.m. @ NFMH: Gabbai Training Workshop with Rabbi Anna. There is NO prayer book Hebrew with Debbie that day.

## Yiskor List

Each year on Yom Kippur, we read a list of loved ones members and guests are remembering during Yiskor. To add a person to that list, please contact Naomi Mindlin at [nsmindlin@photoreview.org](mailto:nsmindlin@photoreview.org) or 215-757-8921.



## Schools News

9/11 @ 9:30 a.m.

First day of School & Parent Orientation

9/14 @ 5 p.m.

First day of midweek school sessions at the Abrahamsons' home

9/18 @ 10 a.m.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Workshop with Rabbi Anna

NOTE: 10/12 midweek session meets at the TvS sukkah @ the Posmontiers

NOTE: 10/19 midweek session meet at NFMH (followed by TvS Simchat Torah celebration)

## From Rabbi Anna, our Education Director...

School officially begins with Parent Orientation and the first day of classes on Sunday, September 11<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. This is very important for lots of logistical reasons. **Please fill out the registration form you received or that is available online on our website ([tzedekvshalom.org/school](http://tzedekvshalom.org/school)) — one form per child — and send it back to me ASAP.** We will be having an open house and a special workshop for parents (both current and prospective) on how to design a creative and meaningful Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience for your child. So please return the forms so we are able to reach out to prospective families in a timely and effective way. Thank you!

We have a new class setup this year that better reflects the size and scope of our school. The curriculum largely remains the same; we simply have three class groupings instead of four, and classes will now be known by Hebrew names instead of by Hebrew letters. Here is how it works:

The former Aleph-Bet class will now be called **Bonim** (Builders/Founders). This class will be taught by Ralph Posmontier (Jewish Studies) and Rebecca Laden (Hebrew).

The former Gimmel class will now called **Giborim** (Heroes/Valiant Ones). This class will be taught by Jerry Manas (Jewish Studies) and Michelle Taylor (Hebrew).

The former Dalet and Hey classes will be combined (for the most part) and will now be called **Dayanim** (Judges). This class will be taught by Michelle Taylor (Hebrew), Jerry Manas (Jewish Studies) and from time to time by Rabbi Anna (Bar/Bat Mitzvah topics).

This year, midweek school for Giborim and Dayanim will be held at the Abrahamson home at 241 S. Chancellor Street in Newtown. Thank you to the Abrahamson family for opening your home to us this year! We are hoping that a Newtown location will be

# High Holidays 5772

All services at Newtown Friends Meeting House (NFMH),  
219 Court St., Newtown PA 18940, unless otherwise noted.



## Selichot

Havdalah followed by the screening of *Groundhog Day* and discussion  
Saturday, September 24 at 7:30–10 p.m.

Location: at the home of Diane and Arnie Gold, 1 Eton Road in  
Yardley, PA 19067

[agoldn1@aol.com](mailto:agoldn1@aol.com) or 215-295-2028

## Rosh Hashanah Evening Family Service and Festive Vegetarian Potluck

Wednesday, September 28 at 6–9 p.m.

Service followed by a Festive Dairy Potluck.

## Rosh Hashanah Morning - Day 1

Thursday, September 29

Service: 9:30 a.m. (Babysitting available.)

Children's Service and Program: 11 a.m.

Following services: Tashlich at Newtown Creek at the old Newtown Commons

## Rosh Hashanah - Day 2

Tikkun Rosh Hashanah: Learning Sessions and Song

Informal vegetarian potluck lunch to follow.

NOTE: Location: NFMH (not at a member's home as usual)

## Women's Day at the Beach

Saturday, September 21

For more information, contact Debbie Chong at 215-504-9268 or [chong.debbie@gmail.com](mailto:chong.debbie@gmail.com).

## Kol Nidre Service

Friday, October 7, 6:00 p.m.

Please bring your tallit.

NOTE: The time is early because the date is so late.

## Yom Kippur Services

Saturday, October 8

Service: 9:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. (Babysitting available.)

Children's Service and Program: 11 a.m.

Afternoon Learning Sessions, Contemplative Prayer, and Song: 1:45–5:15 p.m.

5:30 p.m.: Neilah (Concluding) Service

to 9 p.m.: Break-the-Fast Tasty Vegetarian Potluck (immediately following services)

For further information, contact Linda at  
(215) 860-0119 or [lingold8@verizon.net](mailto:lingold8@verizon.net).

Everyone is welcome at TvS services — even on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

While non-members are encouraged to make a contribution to Tzedek v'Shalom if they attend our High Holiday services, everyone is welcome whether they have made arrangements in advance or not, whether they can afford a monetary contribution or not. That has been our TvS policy since our inception.

convenient (or equally inconvenient) for everyone. Classes will start at 5 p.m. sharp and will end at 6:30 p.m. Like last year, there will be two sessions that will alternate, one taught by Michelle Taylor and one taught by Rabbi Anna.

We do appreciate your cooperation in completing and returning the school registration form as soon as possible, either via email or snail mail to Rabbi Anna Boswell-Levy at [rabianna@gmail.com](mailto:rabianna@gmail.com) or 3331 Pine Road, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006.

On a final, though very important, note: Please remit your child(ren)'s tuition remission to our new treasurer, Steve Pastor, who actually was the TvS treasurer before Joel Bacher and who put his two (now grown) children through our school. If you need to speak to him about any financial concerns or about making adjustment to your tuition, please do not hesitate to call or text Steve, who can be reached at 267-968-7200 (better not leave a voice message though). **No child will be turned away because of any financial difficulty.** If you can afford to give more this year in order to help another family, we encourage you to send a donation via the newly recreated "Jordan Wallis TvS Fund," which eases tuition and field trip costs for all school families.

We hope you are having a great summer and look forward to welcoming you back!

*L'Shalom/For Peace,*  
Rabbi Anna Boswell-Levy  
Religious School Director  
[rabianna@gmail.com](mailto:rabianna@gmail.com)

## Sept 18: Special Workshop with Rabbi Anna Boswell-Levy — Planning for a Meaningful Bar/Bat Mitzvah Experience

10 a.m. at Goodnoe Elementary School (in the Modular Classrooms), 298 Frost Lane Newtown, PA

This interactive session will get you thinking about the following aspects:

- The Physical — Planning the Logistics
- The Emotional — What are your feelings surrounding this lifecycle event?
- The Intellectual — How will you grow through this process?
- The Spiritual — Connections to Judaism — individually and through community

For information about our school, contact Marc Bloom, our Education Chair, at 267-364-5438 or [marc6868@verizon.net](mailto:marc6868@verizon.net), or Rabbi Anna, our Education Director, at 215-287-5128 or [rabianna@gmail.com](mailto:rabianna@gmail.com).

## Hebrew with Morah Devorah

Would you like to start learning Hebrew? Please call Debbie at 215-595-4042 for information on a beginners class.

On **Thursday, 5:30–6:00 p.m.**, an intermediate beginners Hebrew class meets at the home of the Chongs.

At 6:00–7:00 p.m. the advanced class reads part of *parshat Shoftim* in Hebrew, then in English, followed by a discussion. (Look at the *midrash* at [www.g-dcast.com](http://www.g-dcast.com).) If you have any questions, call Debbie at 215-595-4042.



## TvS Romeo Club

The ROMEO\* Club will next meet on Monday, September 26, 1:00 p.m. at The Pineville Tavern, located at the intersection of Route 413 (Durham Road), Township Line Road and Pineville Road. If you have any questions, call me.

–Joel Bacher,  
[carojoel@comcast.net](mailto:carojoel@comcast.net)

\*Retired Old Men Eating Out, now adapted to "Reconstructionist" (or not) Old (or Young) Men Eating Out



## Community Announcements

**Connect with JRF (Jewish Reconstructionist Federation)** - Tzedek v'Shalom is a member of JRF and you can keep in touch with our parent organization through its website and its digital newsletter. JRF offers various listserves to sign up for, depending on your interests, and is available on Facebook and Twitter. For more information, contact <http://jrf.org>.

**Art Tour to Israel** - Galilee International Management Institute is planning an "Israeli and Jewish Art Study Tour" in Israel on January 3–10, 2012. Four subjects will be covered: One Hundred Years of Art in Israel, Contemporary Israeli Art, Arabic Artists In Israel, and Israeli Artists Deal with the Holocaust. The study tour is designed for academics, museum employees, and community members interested in current trends and the history of Israeli and Jewish Art. For further information, contact Mrs. Shoshi Norman, Programme Director, Centre of Middle East and Religious Studies, Galilee International Management Institute, at [snorman@galilcol.ac.il](mailto:snorman@galilcol.ac.il) or [www.galilcol.ac.il](http://www.galilcol.ac.il).





Dear Friends:

I have struggled with sugar addiction, high cholesterol, and low energy my whole adult life. Recently, I decided to take charge of my physical health. I hired a personal trainer, but my struggles with sweets, high cholesterol, excess weight and low energy continued.

About 4 months ago, I was introduced to a nutritional shake called Shakeology. It claimed to have a cholesterol reducing impact, control weight, and positively affect mood and energy. I was skeptical that this product would help me, but given the 30 day money back guarantee, and my trust in the person who introduced it to me, I decided to try it. I LOVED the taste, noticed an immediate decrease in my sugar cravings, and decided that I would have my cholesterol re-tested in 3 months to see if the product did what it claimed.

Three months later, I was absolutely SHOCKED to discover that my cholesterol went down 48 points and I lost 10 pounds! I kid you not! So now, not only am I hooked on Shakeology (it tastes like a Wendy's Frosty), but I also decided to become a distributor for it. I am a bit medication-phobic, and had always resisted going on medication for cholesterol despite my doctor's urging. Finding a **completely natural**, whole food, nutrient dense shake-- full of protein, amino acids, antioxidants, prebiotics, digestive enzymes and so much more to address my nutritional needs was such a blessing. Replacing one meal a day with Shakeology gives you the nutrients equivalent to 5 trips to the salad bar. I am living proof that this product is the real deal.

To learn more about Shakeology or to order, please visit my website [www.shakeassist.com](http://www.shakeassist.com). **IMPORTANT: sign up for Home Delivery. You won't pay shipping and you can cancel it anytime or return the product for a full refund in the first 30 days! It is a totally risk free purchase.**

If you have questions, please email me at [kevnec@aol.com](mailto:kevnec@aol.com).

In Health,  
Robin Necowitz  
[www.shakeassist.com](http://www.shakeassist.com)



## In Our Shul...

### Member News

Please note the following new phone number for Kena, Lee, Nora, and Ethan Leitner: 215-378-4868. Be sure to mark your contact info for them.

### Refuah Shleymah (Get Well Wishes)

Jules and Arline Kessler, Paula Adler's parents  
Renee Desobry — also would love to have visitors!

### Home Bound (and would love visitors!)

Susan Kitces, Anna Kitces's mom (lives at the Kitces/Fishman residence)  
Ettie Kernis, Bobbie Posmontier's mom (lives at the Posmontier residence)  
Eddie Mann, Diane Gold's dad (lives at Manor Care in Yardley)

## Lifecycle Events at TvS

### Anniversaries:

Max Yaffe & Joan Amatniek	September 5
Sharon and Jerry Manas	September 10, 1989
Larry & Jennifer Garfield	September 28, 1986

### Birthdays:

Rob Weintraub	September 1
Matthew Lifson	September 2
Alex Basseches	September 4
Jordyn Friedman	September 8
Sharon Blumenthal	September 11
Julie Goldstein	September 11, 1975
Laura Fishman	September 13
John Pawling	September 14
Kyle Panick	September 15
Noa Kuzma	September 18
Jes Savrin	September 18
Jennifer Wallis	September 19, 1983
Ralph Posmontier	September 22
Bonnie Lewis	September 25
Michela Lewis	September 29

### Yahrzeits:

Yahrzeit dates are listed here by the Jewish death day (according to the Jewish calendar) and its Gregorian equivalent this year. The original death date follows in parenthesis when available.

Israel Hershgordon	1 Elul/August 31 (8/12/34)
Esther Fein	2 Elul/September 1 (8/25/79)
Etta Blask	4 Elul/September 3 (8/18/77)
Estelle Lilienstein	5 Elul/September 4 (9/7/97)
Norman Gromer	9 Elul/September 8 (8/26/93)
Helene Berkowitz	10 Elul/September 11 (9/7/73)
Evelyn H. Gold	10 Elul/September 11 (9/10/00)
Roslyn Burd Walcoff	16 Elul/September 15 (9/13/03)
Fritzi Siegel	18 Elul/September 17 (9/4/85)
Elsa Maene	23 Elul/September 22 (9/2/10)
Ruth Kates	27 Elul/September 26
Betty Gold	27 Elul/September 26 (9/27/08)
Jerry Cohen	8 Tishrei/October 6 (9/14/02)
Walter Posmontier	8 Tishrei/October 6 (9/14/02)
Edward J. Schwalb	11 Tishrei/October 9 (9/17/02)
Fannie Rosenfeld	15 Tishrei/October 13 (9/27/69)
Goldie and Harry Kahn	September

## High Holidays Preparations

If you are available to help me coordinate the readings and *aliyot* for the high holy days 5772, please contact me.

Many thanks.  
Debbie Chong  
[chong.debbie@gmail.com](mailto:chong.debbie@gmail.com)



## Mitzvah Corner

### July/August Thank You's to...

We all give Joel a hearty “thank you” for his years of service on the Board — as member, President, and (most recently) Treasurer. As our new President Jerry Manas put it, “Joel, thanks so much for making this transition so smooth. You’ll be missed at board meetings but it will be great to see you at other TvS events!”

### Lost & Found

Found: A tallis bag and tallis. If you are missing one, look in the TvS closet at Newtown Friends Meetinghouse, OR ask Ralph Posmontier about the set that we found. Ralph can be contacted at 215-579-2644 or [ralph9816@gmail.com](mailto:ralph9816@gmail.com).

### We all got thanked...

TvS co-sponsored the event Rabbi Anna described starting on page 1 of this newsletter. We received the following note from the person who coordinated the entire program:

Dear Rabbi Anna,

Thanks for all your support with this event. It was a big success. If you or one of your congregants would like to help with future events, please attend the next planning meeting at my home on September 6, 7:00 p.m. Let me know if you or anyone else might be attending. Thanks again. I welcome the opportunity to work with you again.

Natalie Joy Kaye

Share TvS with a new friend.

Remember to hand out TvS “business” cards!

# 9/11 — Ten Years Later

The following is an excerpt from a posting by Rabbi Arthur Waskow on 8/30/2011 on the The Shalom Center website. The full article can be found at [www.theshalomcenter.org/node/1458](http://www.theshalomcenter.org/node/1458).

## Ten Years Later:

### The Sukkah & the World Trade Center

...In 2001, September 11 came three weeks before Sukkot, the Jewish harvest festival whose major symbol is a thatched hut, a “sukkah,” utterly open to the wind and rain. Through that day and night, I was haunted by two images: the proud, massive, sky-penetrating Twin Towers on Manhattan’s edge, and the utterly vulnerable sukkah we were soon to build.

On September 12, I wrote [this] meditation....

Shalom, salaam — Arthur

### *The Sukkah & the World Trade Center*

When the Jewish community celebrates the harvest festival, we build “sukkot.”

What is a “sukkah”? Just a fragile hut with a leafy roof, the most vulnerable of houses. Vulnerable in time, where it lasts for only a week each year. Vulnerable in space, where its roof must be not only leafy but leaky — letting in the starlight, and gusts of wind and rain.

In our prayers on every evening, we plead with God — “*Ufros alenu sukkat shlomekha*” — “Spread over all of us Your sukkah of shalom.”

*Why a sukkah? — Why does the prayer plead to God for a “sukkah of shalom” rather than God’s “tent” or “house” or “palace” of peace?*

*Precisely because the sukkah is so vulnerable.*

For much of our lives we try to achieve peace and safety by building with steel and concrete and toughness:

**Pyramids, air raid shelters, Pentagons, World Trade Centers.**

**Hardening what might be targets and, like Pharaoh, hardening our hearts against what is foreign to us.**

**But the sukkah comes to remind us: We are in truth all vulnerable. If “a hard rain gonna fall,” it will fall on all of us.**

Americans have felt invulnerable. The oceans, our wealth, our military power have made up what seemed an invulnerable shield. We may have begun feeling uncomfortable in the nuclear age, but no harm came to us. Yet yesterday the ancient truth came home: We all live in a sukkah.

Not only the targets of attack but also the instruments of attack were among our proudest possessions: the sleek transcontinental airliners. They availed us nothing. Worse than nothing.

Even the greatest oceans do not shield us; even the

mightiest buildings do not shield us; even the wealthiest balance sheets and the most powerful weapons do not shield us.

**There are only wispy walls and leaky roofs between us. The planet is in fact one interwoven web of life. The command to love my neighbor as I do myself is not an admonition to be nice; it is a statement of truth like the law of gravity. For my neighbor and myself are interwoven. If I pour contempt upon my neighbor, hatred will recoil upon me.**

What is the lesson, when we learn that we — all of us — live in a sukkah? How do we make such a vulnerable house into a place of shalom, of peace and security and harmony and wholeness?

The lesson is that only a world where we all recognize our vulnerability can become a world where all communities feel responsible to all other communities. And only such a world can prevent such acts of rage and murder.

If I treat my neighbor’s pain and grief as foreign, I will end up suffering when my neighbor’s pain and grief curdle into rage.

But if I realize that in simple fact the walls between us are full of holes, I can reach through them in compassion and connection....

What would it mean... to recognize that both the United States and Islam live in vulnerable sukkot? What do we need to do to recover our knowledge of the history of two centuries of Western colonization and neo-colonial support for oppressive regimes in much of the Muslim world? How do we keep remembering that in ALL religious communities and traditions — including Judaism and Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism, as well as Islam — there are streaks of blood? How do we work with the peaceful majority in each community to grow past those messages of violence toward embodying the vision of compassion? How do we welcome Muslim societies fully into the planetary community? What does the United States need to do to encourage grass-roots support for those elements of Islam that seek to renew the tradition?

How do we encourage not top-down regimes that make alliances with our own global corporations to despoil the planet, but grassroots religious and cultural and political communities that seek to control their own resources in ways that nurture the earth?...

***Instead of entering upon a “war of civilizations,” we must pursue a planetary peace. We must spread over all of us the sukkah of shalom.***

## TvS Calendar — September into October 2011 • *Elul 5771/Tishrei 5772*

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 2 Elul Prayerbook Hebrew 5:30 p.m. Beginners 6:30 p.m. Intermediate @ the Chongs' home	2	3
4	5	6	7	8 Prayerbook Hebrew 5:30 p.m. Beginners 6:30 p.m. Intermediate @ the Chongs' home	9 5:30 p.m. Friday Night with TvS @ NFMH	10
11 9:30 a.m. First day of Religious School & Parent Orientation @ Goodnoe School 1 p.m. Welcome Back Barbeque @ the Pastors' home	12	13	14 5:00 p.m. Religious School	15 NO Prayerbook Hebrew this week. 7:30 p.m. Gabbai Work- shop @ NFMH	16	17 9:30 a.m. Meditation 10 a.m. Shabbat Service @ NFMH
18 9:30 a.m. Religious School 10 a.m. Bar/Bat Mitzvah Workshop with Rabbi Anna @ Goodnoe School	19	20	21 5:00 p.m. Religious School @ the Abrahamsons' home	22 Prayerbook Hebrew 5:30 p.m. Beginners 6:30 p.m. Intermediate @ the Chongs' home	23	24 7:30 p.m.: Selichot Movie ( <i>Groundhog Day</i> ) & Discussion @ the Gold's home
25 9:30 a.m. Religious School @ Goodnoe School	26	27	28 6–9p.m.: Family Service followed by a dairy Potluck Dinner @ NFMH  Erev Rosh Hashanah	29 1 Tishrei 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.: Service 11 a.m.: Children's Service & program @ NFMH Following services: Tashlich at the Newtown Creek Rosh Hashanah	30 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.: Tikkun Rosh Hashanah - learning session and song followed by potluck lunch @ NFMH Rosh Hashanah	October 1 Women's Day at the Beach (Contact Debbie Chong for details.)
2 9:30 a.m. Religious School @ Goodnoe School	3	4	5 5:00 p.m. Religious School @ the Abrahamsons' home	6 Prayerbook Hebrew 5:30 p.m. Beginners 6:30 p.m. Intermediate @ the Chongs' home	7 6 p.m. Kol Nidre @ NFMH  Erev Yom Kippur	8 9:30 a.m. Yom Kippur Morning Services 11 a.m. Children's Ser- vice and Program 5:30 p.m. Neilah Break-the-Fast follows the end of services. @ NFMH Yom Kippur
9 10 a.m. Sukkah Building & Decorating @ the TvS sukkah at the Posmontiers' home	10	11	12 5:00 p.m. Religious School 6:30 p.m. <i>Pizza in the Hut</i> @ the Posmontiers' home Erev Sukkot	13 Prayerbook Hebrew 5:30 p.m. Beginners 6:30 p.m. Intermediate @ the Chongs' home Sukkot - Day 1	14 Sukkot - Day 2	15 Sukkot - Day 3
16 9:30 a.m. Religious School @ Goodnoe School  Sukkot - Day 4	17  Sukkot - Day 5	18  Sukkot - Day 6	19 5:00 p.m. Religious School 5:30 p.m. Simchat Torah Extravaganza @ NFMH Sukkot - Day 7 Erev Simchat Torah	20 Prayerbook Hebrew 5:30 p.m. Beginners 6:30 p.m. Intermediate @ the Chongs' home Simchat Torah & Shemini Atzeret	21	22 24 Tishrei

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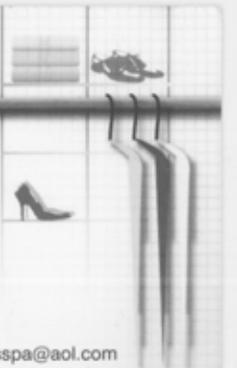
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