



Message from the Rabbi –January 2014



36 Rabbis Shave for the Brave...and More

Dear friends,

Three weeks ago, on December 14, a remarkable 8-year-old boy, Sam Sommer, died of AML, acute myeloid leukemia. AML is a particularly virulent form of leukemia with far worse outcomes than other forms of the disease. I knew about Sam because his parents, Phyllis and Michael Sommer, are my colleagues, fellow Reform rabbis. They live outside of Chicago with their now three surviving children. When Sam was first diagnosed 18 months ago, Phyllis began to blog about their family's experience, initially to keep the members of her and Michael's respective congregations up to date on Sam's progress. Sam loved superheroes, and so his parents called their blog, "Superman Samuel."

(www.supermansamuel.blogspot.com.)



Written with raw honesty and courage, the blog quickly went viral. Spreading beyond the Sommer family's immediate circle of relatives, friends, congregants and colleagues, the blog was soon being followed by people all over the world. I read along for months – first with anxiety, then joy, and then sorrow as the story went from fear to relief and then to unbearable anguish. A gifted and beautiful writer, Phyllis wrote for a year and a half about the

roller coaster of their lives: four rounds of chemotherapy, remission of a few months, relapse, a five month preparation for a risky bone marrow transport- their last hope- the transplant itself, and its ultimate failure less than two months later. In his last month, aware that all treatment options had been exhausted and that he would die of his illness, Sam asked to go to Israel where his parents had met in rabbinical school and where they had always promised their children that they would someday visit as a family. Miraculously, the trip took place although Sam was very weak and sick. Shortly after returning to Chicago, Sam died in his home but not before arranging to order a birthday present for his three-year old brother and asking his mother to help him hide love notes around the house for all his siblings. So widely had Sam become known by then that his death was front page news in The Chicago Tribune. Over a thousand people attended his funeral.

Sam wanted to be famous. As his mother, Phyllis, wrote in one of her blog posts: "I can think of a million, billion other ways that he could have been" But Sam *has* become famous because his life – and tragic death – has started something big.

At the end of October, Phyllis and a friend had a crazy idea: what if 36 Reform rabbis were to shave their heads to bring attention to the fact that only 4% of United States federal funding for cancer research is earmarked for all childhood cancers and to raise \$360,000 for this essential research? What if, they thought, there could be a public head-shaving event at the annual convention of Reform rabbis scheduled to be held in Chicago in March –

and, living nearby, Sam could come and get to see the tremendous support for him and other kids with cancer? Sadly, Sam didn't live long enough to be able to see this event. But not only is it going to happen, it has grown in size, energy and ambition.

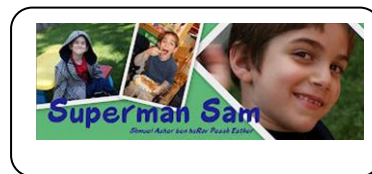
But first - why 36?

Our Sages taught that at all times there are 36 righteous people in the world, and if just one of them was missing, the world itself would come to an end. These individuals are known as the Lamed-Vavniks, based on the numeric equivalents of the two Hebrew letters for 36 - lamed, which is 30, and vav, which is 6. The identities of the Lamed-Vavniks are hidden from each other and even themselves. In fact, should a person claim to be one of the 36, that would be proof that he or she is most certainly not a Lamed-Vavnik because a true Lamed-Vavnik is too humble to think that he or she is that righteous.

But what if, for one moment, everyone behaved as if he or she was truly that righteous? Imagine such a world! And so 36 Rabbis Shave for the Brave was born.

(<https://www.facebook.com/thirtysixrabbis>)

The response from the rabbinic community has been overwhelming; in just over six weeks, at last count, 72 Reform rabbis have registered to shave their heads at our upcoming convention – men and women alike. They have raised over \$300,000, and the count is still climbing. As one of my colleagues wrote on her personal fund-raising page: “Who are we? We are a group of slightly-meshugene, but very devoted rabbis who are yearning to do something. We can't save Sammy; perhaps, though, we can save others like him. And spare other parents like Phyllis and Michael from the pain of telling their child that there is nothing that the doctors can do to save his life.”



All proceeds to the Thirty-Six Rabbis Shave for the Brave event will go to the St. Baldrick's Foundation, a volunteer-driven charity committed to funding the most promising research to find cures for childhood cancers and give survivors long, healthy lives. From the St. Baldrick's website (www.stbaldricks.org) I learned that in the 1950s, almost all kids diagnosed with cancer died. Because of research, today about 85% of kids with the most common type of cancers will live. But for many other types, progress has been limited, and for some kids, like Sam Sommer, there is still little hope for a cure. Even when children do survive, because of the treatments they had as kids, by the time they're 45, more than 95% of survivors will have a chronic health problem, and 80% will have severe or life-threatening conditions. So in addition to finding cures, a lot of research is focused on preventing the lifelong damage that results from surgeries, radiation and chemotherapies given while young bodies and brains are just developing.

I will be at the Chicago convention in March, and I have donated to several of my colleagues' fundraising pages. I hope that you

will take a few moments to do one or more of the following:

1. Read about Superman Sam so that he is not forgotten and so that, as he wished, he can be “famous.”
2. Read about and consider making a donation to 36 Rabbis Shave for the Brave or St. Baldrick's.
3. Become a bone marrow donor.

(<http://bethematch.org/>) The test is a two second painless cheek swab. Then you go on a national registry. That's it. Someday, if you and a patient are lucky, you will be a match, perhaps have an opportunity to save a life, and – as Sam would say – be famous.

4. Think about what it would mean in your own life to become a Lamed-Vavnik. Every one of us can be.

Thank you for helping to remember Sam Sommer and make his life an even greater gift to the world. Wishing you and your loved ones a (secular) new year of health, happiness and peace.

Rabbi Kim S. Geringer

???????ASK THE RABBI???????



Have a religious question that you have wanted to ask the Rabbi? Well here is your chance to submit via **email to info@shaareyhayam.org, use the website or send a letter to A Reform Jewish Community, P.O. Box 1268, Manahawkin, NJ 08050 Attention Rabbi Geringer.** The Rabbi will select some questions and they will be published, along with her answers, in the newsletter.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

John F. Kennedy once said, "Ask not what your synagogue can do for you, but what you can do for your synagogue." Maybe that is not the exact quote, but it certainly makes a good theme for the coming year.

We are all dues-paying members of this organization, and justifiably expect to receive certain benefits in exchange for what we pay. The Temple provides services we rely upon, and we on the Executive Board always strive to provide these to the best of our ability. When there are questions and complaints, it is our job to handle these as well.

While we desire to be a place where people feel they get their money's worth, I think we also want to be more than that. The Temple is entering its tenth year. We want to improve, not just maintain the status quo. This can only be accomplished by emphasizing what we each can do for the Congregation, rather than asking what it can do for us. In this New Year, let's think about what we can contribute to our community based upon our individual talents and abilities. Get involved, volunteer, give of your time and your resources. Our community needs all of us if we are to move forward.

Philip Miller,



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Yahrzeits

בראבא ve yitkadash sh'mei יתגדל

December 4	Andrew Barndt, Brother of Pat Barndt
December 7	Robert Barndt, Father of Pat Barndt
January 11 (Sherat 10)	Esther Dunn, Mother of Robert Dunn
January 11	Rubin Kaplan, Father of Michael Kaplan
January 13	Mary Ellen Taub, Mother of Cyndy Friedland
January 21 (Tevet 26)	Alan Gardiner, Father of Hope Gardiner
January 22	George Harmon, Father of Inez Levine
January 26	Donald P. Fisher, Senior, Grandfather of Laura Miller
January 27	Hugh Higgins, Father of Wendi Higgins
January 27	Edith Rosen, Mother of Rhona Levy
January 30	Celia Miller, Mother of Philip Miller



Condolence from Congregation Sha'arey Ha-Yam
to Cyndy Friedman,
Death of her Brother Marvin Taub



A Convenient Hatred: The History of Antisemitism by [Phyllis Goldstein](#)

Comments: Wendi Higgins

This book was very good in detailing the history of anti-Semitism. Now if only there would be a solution or end to this horrible scapegoating to write about we would all be better off.

The book really took me away. I enjoyed it very much.

Congregation and Hebrew School

On Thursday, December 12th our Hebrew school students and the choir sang at the Lights of Life Holiday Celebration at Southern Ocean Medical Center. They joined together to sing Ocho Kanddelkas for their contribution to the program.

This was so different from "Dreidle" and truly appreciated by the audience. After the program everyone was invited into the dining room for refreshments, and latkes!

Membership

Membership in our spiritual family is a wonderful way to meet new friends that have moved or just moved to Southern Ocean County. We are reaching out in different ways to let folks know that we are here...it's hard to believe that so many unaffiliated Jews do not know that there is a Reform congregation right here in Manahawkin!! Help us grow and spread the word...who knows, your neighbor might have grandchildren that are looking to find out more about their Judaism, roots and heritage!



MEMBERSHIP

TEMPLE COMMITTEES**New Members Welcome**

Temple Committees	Chair/Members
Birthdays & Anniversaries	<u>Susan Shapiro</u>
Choir	<u>Philip Altland</u> Cyndy Friedland, Wendi Higgins, Pat Barndt, Madelyn Dunn, Robert Dunn, Syble Bleiweis, Rena Kreisler
Finance	Treasurer, Financial Secretary, President
Fundraising	<u>Dayna Otto</u> Pat Barndt, Syble Bleiweis, Bari Cohen, Madelyn Dunn, Cyndy Friedland, Wendi Higgins, Joan Silverman, Blanche Spiegel
Greeters	<u>Rose Jackson & Judie Levin</u> Pat Barndt, Syble Bleiweis, Hope Gardiner, Wendi Higgins, Rhonda Levy, Thelma Polon, Susan Shapiro
Hospital Visits	<u>Jack Crespy</u>
Membership	<u>Cyndy Friedland</u> Syble Bleiweis, Joan Silverman
Music	<u>Philip Altland</u> Stan Jackson
Newsletter	<u>Rose Jackson</u> Hope Gardiner
Oneg & Dinners	<u>Madelyn Dunn</u> Pat Barndt, Wendi Higgins
Publicity	<u>Cyndy Friedland</u>
Religious School	<u>Cyndy Friedland/ Phil Miller</u>
Ritual	<u>Charles Flum</u> Philip Altland, Stan Jackson, Alan Levy
Sunshine	<u>Syble Bleiweis</u> Ruth Schlyen, Phyllis Blum, Harriet Cohen
Tributes	<u>Syble Bleiweis</u>
Yahrzeits	<u>Harriet Cohen</u>



The Spirit of Tikkun Olam

The Christmas holiday can be a time to have Chinese food and see a movie, or spend time with friends and family, or do nothing at all. This year some members of our Congregation did something different, they volunteered at St. Mary's Church in Manahawkin.

For the past 8 years, St. Mary's Church has been hosting a Christmas meal for those in need, but it doesn't end there, the people who come are able to find donated clothing, and there are even wrapped gifts for the kids. Robert Dunn has volunteered at St. Mary's for some time, and when he and Madelyn said they could use more volunteers 7 more of us stepped up to help out; Laurie Joe & Augie Blitz were working the craft table, Alan Levy was wrapping gifts and handing out a ton of bread sticks, Cyndy Friedland was doing her schtick putting nice outfits together for people, Ruth Schlyen was working with assorted clothing for people that came by, Robert Dunn was of course cooking, and Madelyn Dunn, Patricia Barndt, and Wendi Higgins were dishing up turkey, stuffing, green beans, and baked ziti to the families that came.

It was a busy day with what appeared to be a couple of hundred people filling up the gymnasium where the kitchen is. Homeless and needy individuals and families filled the rows of tables that stretched the length of the place, where there was something for everyone. Some of the people were victims of the hurricane, and others may have simply been down on their luck.

Tikkun olam, or "repairing the world" has its origins in classical rabbinic literature, and the term "mipnei tikkun ha-olam" which translates to "for the sake and order of the world" or "in the interest of public policy" can be found in the Mishnah (c. 200 CE). The way we as Jews interpret this of course, varies, but one thing I've personally learned from this experience, particularly when the children approached so respectful and shy; a simple child's smile was a better definition of tikkun olam for me. By: Wendi Higgins



The Book Thief

Markus Zusak (Goodreads Author), **Literary Awards** National Jewish Book Award, Book Sense Book of the Year Award for Children's Literature (2007), Buxtehuder Bulle (2008), Prijs van de Kinder- en Jeugdjury Vlaanderen (2009), Printz Honor (2007) and more.....

Write up from Good Reads:

"It is 1939. Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier, and will become busier still.

Liesel Meminger is a foster girl living outside of Munich, who scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can't resist—books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement.

In superbly crafted writing that burns with intensity, award-winning author Markus Zusak, author of *I Am the Messenger*, has given us one of the most enduring stories of our time. "

Submitted by Rose Jackson - Wonder if the movie is as good as the book?



**Join Congregation Sha'arey Ha-Yam for our Tu B'Shevat Dinner
and Seder**

**Friday, January 17th at 6 PM
LCHS 333 North Main Street, Manahawkin**

Name(s) attending Dinner & Seder _ _ _ _ _

Children under 13 attending _ _ _ _ _

Name(s) attending Seder only _ _ _ _ _

Phone Number _ _ _ _ _

Dish being brought to share for dinner _ _ _ _ _

**RSVP prior to January 13th. Call to confirm reservation & food
contribution to:**

**Pat Barndt, 732-244-8006. Mail checks made out to Congregation
Sha'arey Ha-Yam to confirm your reservation to:**

**Congregation Sha'arey Ha-Yam C/O Pat Barndt, 145 Longboat Ave.
Beachwood, NJ 08722**

Members, \$12. Non-Members, \$15. Children under 13, no charge

GABRIELLAS

PIZZERIA & RESTAURANTE

IS SPONSORING

A DINE AROUND

FOR

CONGREGATION SHA'AREY HA-YAM

DATE: THURSDAY JANUARY 23, 2014

TIME: LUNCH THROUGH DINNER

1:00 PM to 8:00 PM

PLACE: 733 ROUTE 72 EAST

MANAHAWKIN, NJ 08050

(K-MART SHOPPING CENTER)

609-978-7750

NOTE: CASH ONLY (ATM MACHINE AVAILABLE)

BYOB

SEE YOU THERE

PLEASE BRING THIS FLYER WITH YOU

Suds & Stuff.

Beer Tasting, Appetizers & Auction

The Arlington.

January 16, 2014

5:30 - 7:30pm

1302 Long Beach Blvd.
Ship Bottom, NJ

\$40 per ticket

Advance Sales Only

\$20 of ticket is tax deductible to the extent permitted by law

This event will benefit S.T.A.R.T.
(Stafford Teachers And Residents Together)
& Gates of the Sea

For Tickets & more information please call

609.709.9410

We NEED your support!

FUND RAISING

- January 16, 2014 - Save The Date - 'Suds & Stuff' - Beer Tasting at The Arlington - Ship Bottom, NJ - 5:30 - 7:30 pm
- Thursday, January 23, 2014 Dine Around Gabriella's 1:00pm to 8:00pm
- ShopRite Cards are a constant fund raiser. Please contact Dayna (609-709-9410) or Syble (609.978.4240) to purchase anytime. They will always be sold at services.
- Tribute Cards can be sent on your behalf to anyone you would like, for any reason you have, for a \$5 donation.



January 2 Alexa Daley



January 17 Marc Dunn



January 30 Cary Belitz

2013 - 2014 Temple Sha'arey Ha-yam Schedule Services 7:30pm

Friday, January 3, 2014
Thursday, January 16, 2014 Studs & Stuff
Friday, January 17, 2014 (Tu B'Shevat)
Thursday, January 23, 2014, Dine Around , Gabriellas
Friday, February 14, 2014
Friday, February 28, 2014
Friday, March 14, 2014
Friday, March 28, 2014
Friday, April 11, 2014
April 17, 2014 Second Seder
Friday, April 25, 2014
Friday, May 9, 2014 Israel Independence Day
Friday, May 23, 2014
Friday, June 13, 2014
Friday, June 27, 2014