

THEVoice

Kol Dorot: A Reform Jewish Community

January 2019 Volume 1, Issue 1



The Mensch Next Dor

The young mensches of Temple Beth El's nursery school are in full tzedakah-planning mode. As part of our Shabbat celebration, we collect tzedakah every Friday. Last November, we used our tzedakah to make "smile kits", a collection of toothbrushes, toothpaste and floss to donate to the Jewish Federation of Northern NJ's Mitzvah Day. In addition, each week the children share one good deed they performed by writing it (with a grown-up's help) on a colorful paper leaf. All the leaves become part of the classroom's growing mitzvah tree.

We teach the children that doing mitzvot and helping our neighbors is a very important part of our Jewish identity! Some of our other group mitzvah projects include donating to the local food pantry and collecting and donating supplies to an animal shelter. We also enjoy helping with any mitzvah projects happening at the temple, especially those of the Bar and Bat Mitzvah students. Our Kol Dorot community is so proud of these young mensches!

Get To Know Kol Dorot's Rabbis

Longtime congregant and past president of Temple Beth El, Marlys Lehmann, interviews both Rabbi David Widzer and Rabbi Noah Fabricant for our inaugural issue of *The Voice*. See pages 4 and 5 to read all about them.

THEVoice

The Voice is a newsletter for members of Kol Dorot: A Reform Jewish Community.

Editors: Suzanna Breit & Dana Ware

Layout: Jordan Harris

Contributor: Joan Cooper, Marlys Lehmann & Barbara Weinberg

Ad sales: adsales@koldorot.org

Suggestions: info@koldorot.org

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From Rabbi David Widzer and Rabbi Noah Fabricant

More than a year ago, when Temple Beth Or and Temple Beth El announced their intention to merge and form a new Jewish community, we two rabbis didn't know each other very well. We had crossed paths at a few meetings, but that was about it. After a year of attending many meetings, coordinating events, and planning for the future, we now know each other much better, and we have grown as co-leaders and rabbinic partners.

For this first message to the Kol Dorot community, we decided to write jointly to share some of our personal experience with the merger so far.

When we set off on this path, we were justifiably nervous. Would we like each other? Would we disagree about things? Although each of us has worked as part of a team of rabbis in previous congregations, we are used to being the only rabbinic voice in our current positions. Would there be tension?

We quickly discovered that those fears were unfounded. First, we realized we have a lot in common. We share a rabbinical school, of course, but also many other summer camp and youth group connections, as well as many common friends.

Working together, our ideas and perspectives have been sharpened. We have been able to develop and lead in new directions that would be difficult or impossible to achieve alone.

We also found that we are in very close agreement on nearly all issues of synagogue life. Our visions and aspirations for Kol Dorot fit together. (Much more on these to come.)

And we have enjoyed working together and getting to know each other. We showed our playful sides at a joint Purim spiel. To channel the more formal spirit of the High Holy Days, we offered shared Selichot and Rosh Hashanah services. We have been actively planning for the first year of Kol Dorot and beyond—from b'nai mitzvah procedures and religious school to seating arrangements in the sanctuary and traffic patterns in the parking lot.

Working together successfully as rabbis is about more than avoiding conflict. It is experiencing a basic truth already evident in the wisdom of the Bible. Ecclesiastes writes: "Two are better than one, for they have a greater return on their labor" (4:9). Or even more colorfully in the Book of Proverbs: "Iron sharpens iron, just as one person sharpens another" (27:17). Working together, our ideas and perspectives have been sharpened. We have been able to develop and lead in new directions that would be difficult or impossible to achieve alone.

It is our firm belief that our entire Kol Dorot community will have an experience similar to ours. As we get to know each other, we will discover countless connections and similarities. We will become friends and partners in the task of Jewish living and learning and reimagining our Jewish community. And we will find ourselves much greater together than we ever could have been apart.

We look forward to getting to know our entire new community. May our path ahead be blessed.

Rabbi Noah & Rabbi David

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From the Communications Team

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *The Voice*, a new printed publication for circulation to all households of Temple Beth El of Northern Valley and Temple Beth Or in our transition year towards finalizing the merger of our two organizations. We are grateful for everyone's contributions to this issue and welcome your suggestions for the future. We would especially like to recognize our advertisers for their invaluable support, making this new publication a budget neutral effort. If you are interested in advertising, please email adsales@koldorot.org.

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Across: (6) February; (7) Figs; (8) Environment; (9) Olives; (10) Almond

Down: (1) Barley; (2) Four; (3) Pomegranates; 4) Grapes; (5) Dates; (6) Fifteenth

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Set Sail With Us!

We're not sure we can contain our excitement! Your Kol Dorot leadership is moving full steam ahead, busy putting all the pieces together for our successful merger and new beginning. The Integration Team, comprised of board members from both congregations, is knee-deep in operations, real estate, bylaws, finance, education, fundraising, music, and about 100 other things!

But what we know, both inherently and through our experience, is that we can't do it alone. As we all work to build this new community, we need your help. Perhaps one of your New Year's resolutions is to get more involved in temple life. Even it wasn't, it's not too late! There are events to plan, committees to join, boxes to be packed, and dozens of other ways to get involved.

As we embark upon our new future together, our goal isn't just operational efficiency and financial stability (although those are important, too). It's to build a vibrant, strong Jewish community in Bergen County, inheriting all of the strengths from past generations and creating an innovative Jewish experience for our future generations.

We need all hands on deck. Be a part of this exciting time in our congregational life. Reach out to one of us and ask how you can get involved. We can't wait for you to join us!

Lee Anne Luing
tbopresluing@gmail.com

Angela Schuster
angela@fauxtimedesign.com

Joel Rubin
joel@joelrubin.com

Donna Selby
donnaselby@gmail.com



Angela Schuster, Joel Rubin, and Lee Anne Luing (Donna Selby not pictured)

Getting to Know Kol Dorot's Rabbis by Marlys Lehmann



Rabbi David Widzer

It is gratifying to speak with a person who is sure of a decision he or she has made. It creates a sense of shalom.

Rabbi David Widzer says of the merger of Temple Beth El and Temple Beth Or, "I am one hundred percent convinced that this is the right step for our community as a whole."

It has been seven years since Rabbi Widzer came to Temple Beth El from a 150-family congregation in Franklin, Massachusetts. Before that, he served a larger congregation along with a senior rabbi, a cantor, and a team of educators at Temple Shalom of Newton, MA. Rabbi Widzer grew up in Shaker Heights, Ohio, as a member of Fairmount Temple, a large Reform congregation in the Cleveland suburbs.

Rabbi Widzer's wife, Karen Loewy, is an attorney with Lambda Legal, an LGBT civil rights organization. Their son, Judah, an eighth-grader, became a bar mitzvah last year. Their daughter, Elisheva, is in the fifth grade.

Rabbi Widzer is looking forward to the merger. "I am excited at the opportunity to re-create what it means to be a Jewish community," he says. "We are not starting from scratch. We have wonderful legacies we are building upon. We are heirs to two fantastic congregations that were built and nurtured by the generations before us as a home for Jewish living and learning. We now have the opportunity to do the same for this generation and the generations to come." Thus, the name of the new congregation was chosen intentionally: Kol Dorot, "Voice of Generations."

"My great-great grandparents in the shtetl could not imagine how Judaism is practiced today," he says. "I trust that my great-great grandchildren will practice

Judaism in meaningful ways I can't imagine. Our Jewish community is changing, but it has always been changing. Judaism has always learned to adapt to continue to bring meaning to our lives."

In the short term, Rabbi Widzer says, he is focused on how to address the loss that some people feel and how to make people feel comfortable about the merger. "We should celebrate all that we have done. This merger is not a defeat; it is a closing of one chapter and the opening of a new one. We honor our past as we transition to the future."

Having worked with several clergy members in one of his former congregations, he is excited to work with another rabbi, Rabbi Fabricant, to create Kol Dorot. "We are a good match. We've enjoyed working together and our outlooks on congregational life are similar. I think we strengthen one another and the community we serve."

Rabbi Widzer has only one concern. He doesn't want Kol Dorot to default into only doing things the same way they have always been done. But he does not sound as if he believes Kol Dorot will go in that direction.

"Our mission," Rabbi Widzer says, "is help re-create Jewish community in new ways, so that it will continue to be meaningful down till the time of our great-great grandchildren."

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Rabbi Noah Fabricant

Getting to know Rabbi Noah is like introducing yourself to an old friend. He is friendly and forthcoming.

Rabbi Noah has been Temple Beth Or's spiritual leader since 2014. The temple he came from, Washington Hebrew Congregation, in Washington, D.C., was very different

from Beth Or, with 3,000 member families, five rabbis and two cantors. After five years there, where he liked the opportunity of performing dozens of weddings and conversions, and where he liked that four older rabbis were on hand to teach him, he wanted to find a smaller congregation, where he could get to know his congregants. And, he wanted to come back to the New Jersey area -- he grew up in West Orange and belonged to Sharey Tefilo-Israel, a Reform synagogue in South Orange.

Beth Or welcomed him and his wife, Ali Harwin, who is an attorney in New York, when they came on their first visit to the temple to attend a Friday night service with their then-two-week old baby girl. That baby, Lorry, is almost five; her little sister, Franny, is two. Beth Or has continued to embrace them. Rabbi Noah's parents have joined the temple, traveling from West Orange. Rabbi Noah and his family live in Ridgewood.

What has he found special about Temple Beth Or? "It's a warm, wonderful group of people, haimish, friendly families who are excited to be Jewish together. TBO is very flexible and open to new ideas. Different customs are respected. There is no culture of conflict, but of trying to work together."

On the merger of two congregations: "I'm most excited about meeting a whole new group of people. For a rabbi, it's a rare opportunity to get the chance to make so many new connections without giving up the

meaningful relationships I've developed during my years at TBO. Kol Dorot is a once-in-a-career chance to build our community from basic questions: Who are we? What are our Jewish goals? What do we want for ourselves and each other?"

For our new religious school, we will be asking similar questions: What Jewish experiences and knowledge do we want our children to have? What is the best way to pass them down to the next generation?

But, like probably each of the several hundred families about to embark on the congregational change in their life, he has some concerns about the transition. "I'm concerned that Kol Dorot will not feel like home right away. We're going to have to work quickly to get to know each other, to get moving on our mission. That's what will bring us together."

And the rabbinate, Kol Dorot's rabbinate. What will occur is "not for me to say." "Rabbi Widzer and I are a good match. We have very similar approaches, are close to each other philosophically. It's difficult to imagine doing this with a rabbi I didn't respect as much as Rabbi Widzer."

The road to merger is getting shorter every day, he says. Rabbi Noah is ready.

Mazel Tov on *The Voice!*

This publication celebrates the written kol (voice) of our new community and features the dorot (generations) of our new Reform Jewish community. We are so proud!

Kol Dorot Integration Team

TBE: David Fischer, Marty Kasdan, Jeffrey Lester, Sarahjane Nacht, Joel Rubin, Angela Schuster, Jeff Silver, Stephen Verp, and Rabbi David

TBO: Roberta Abrams, John Bluemke, Phil Eisenberg, Roger Gross, Lee Anne Luing, Eric Meisner, Donna Selby, Matt Wapner, and Rabbi Noah

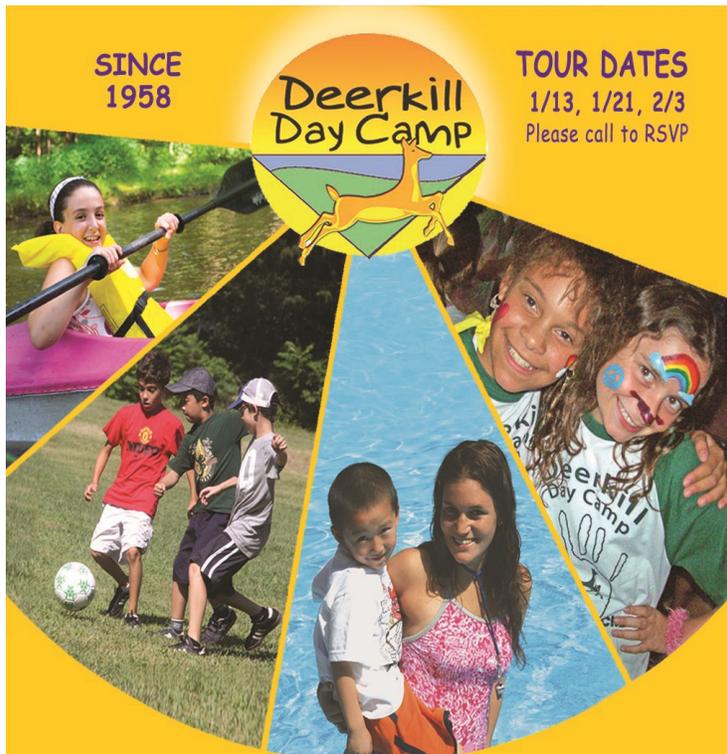
madrich noun

\mä'driḵ \

plural madrichim \mädri'kēm \

The Voices of our Madrichim

Madrich or Madricha means “leader/guide”. Our Madrichim support our religious schools by serving as teaching assistants in the classroom, working in the office, shadowing a student with special needs, or by doing one-on-one Hebrew tutoring. Our Madrichim program offers 8th-12th grade teens the opportunity to develop communication and leadership skills, to increase self-confidence, express Jewish values, and learn practical teaching skills by assisting teachers in the classroom. *The Voice* recently sat down with two madrichim and one mom in our community to ask them about their experiences.



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Dani Gorman is a madrich at TBE and a sophomore in high school. Outside of being a madrich, they enjoy playing in band, writing, singing and reading. In the future, they want to go into a profession where they can help people on a daily basis. An issue Dani cares deeply about is LGBT+ rights and advocacy and educating others about the community.

The Voice: Thank you for being one of the first madrichim voices in our inaugural issue. What do you remember about your own experience as a student with your madrich?

Dani: I remember my madrich as extremely helpful, especially on Tuesdays with Hebrew learning. Breaking into small groups was a great way to get special attention. I remember when I was a kid, the madrich in the classroom would always be helpful and often were more relatable than the teachers—and I try to do the same thing now that I am a madrich.

The Voice: What have you learned or how have you benefited from being a madrich?

Dani: I have definitely learned patience. Typically, I work with 20 kids in 2nd and 3rd grade. It can be noisy. And sometimes it's clear that some kids don't want to be there, while others are interested and want to learn, and I have to find a way to inspire them. I also have learned the prayers really well now that I teach them to others, and I find new insights after hearing some of the same Jewish stories that I learned as a student.

The Voice: What advice would you have for any kids who may considering becoming a madrich?



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Dani: I would say definitely do it, because it's a great feeling to know you are helping kids to learn Jewish culture and religion. You should also understand that kids are kids, and they usually act like it. After a long day of school some kids may be tired or not want to be at religious school and they may have trouble focusing. If I see a kid is upset I will talk with them one on one, and see if I can help. Sometimes I offer them a toy I kept in my bag, so they have something to channel their energy into.

Ben Klein is a TBO madrich and an eighth grader who enjoys being part of his town's rec basketball, rec and travel soccer, school ski club, and serving as a madrich, of course. This summer marks his fifth year at Camp Harlam (a URJ sleep-away camp in PA), an amazing place Ben and twin sister Anna look forward to each summer.

The Voice: Thanks for joining us as one of the first madrichim voices in our inaugural issue. In your opinion, what's the benefit to participating in the madrichim program?

Ben: I have been a religious school student since I was a little kid. Being a madrich is great way to be a leader in the Jewish community. The program will provide me with leadership and presentation skills I will use for the rest of my life.

The Voice: What are your favorite parts about the program?

Ben: In addition gaining leadership skills and working with the younger religious school students, I really enjoy the opportunity to meet people, bond and connect with them.

The Voice: For 6th, 7th and 8th graders who are considering being part of the madrichim program, what would you tell them?

Ben: It's a lot less pressure than the b'nei mitzvah year. No studying outside of regular school. There is work to do, of course. But it's enjoyable work helping 4th graders learn how to read Hebrew and better understand the Jewish world. That's my role in Moreh

Brent's class. I was once a student in his class. I learned so much more since then thanks to him, my other religious school teachers and Morah Anat.



Jaime Klein—a madrich mom.

The Voice: As a TBO Religious School parent, how do you feel after all the planning for Ben and Anna's b'nai mitzvah and the excitement of the special day?

Jaime: I must confess that the lull after our twin simcha was great. There was an allure of not having to be anywhere early on a Sunday after seven or eight years of religious school. But surprisingly, my body clock is still ready to go to TBO!

The Voice: What would you say to other parents about the madrichim program?

Jaime: Being involved in the program allows my family to regularly stay connected with the rabbi, cantor, Morah Anat and the energetic religious school. On the Sunday following the tragic events in Pittsburgh, I attended the parent session to discuss the events and its impact on our children and our community. That was something particularly meaningful for me. Having to drop off Ben off that morning gave me the opportunity to personally connect with the rabbi, Anat and other parents.

The Voice: Anything else helpful for parents and future madrichim to know?

Jaime: Yes. We were initially worried about flexibility. What if we had a conflict? During the religious school years, it was so important for us to strive to never miss a Sunday. After speaking with Morah Anat, we learned it would not be an issue if there was a conflict that had priority over an occasional Sunday morning.

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New Year's Brunch: A New Tradition



For many years, Temple Beth El held a New Year's brunch early in January to mark the end of the school break and the

beginning of the secular new year. The intergenerational effort was coordinated by Sisterhood, Men's Club and the Chai Society (a group for long-time TBE members). It was held on Sundays when religious school was in session so more parents could join in on the fun.

Congregants have enjoyed a variety of light-hearted and interesting programs at the New Year's brunch over the years, including authors discussing their recently-published books, entertaining comedians and even a lively klezmer band. Joan Cooper of TBE's Sisterhood says, "This year, on Sunday, January 6, we are delighted to welcome Rabbi Joyce Newmark to share bubbe-meises, the fairy tales of Jewish grandmothers. We are thrilled to share TBE's tradition with our TBO friends, making it our first ever Kol Dorot New Year's brunch." There is never a charge to attend, all refreshments are provided by temple members, and the bagels and lox are supplemented by homemade salads, kugels, baked goods and much more. Here's to many years of wonderful brunch memories that will be created by our future generations at Kol Dorot.

Youth Writers Needed!

Kol Dorot seeks budding writers to share poems, essays or stories inspired by your family **Passover holiday traditions**. Youngsters in grades 5 through 12 are invited to contribute a future edition of *Kol Dorot Buzz* (monthly email) or *The Voice*. Send your submissions to info@koldorot.org by Monday, January 21.



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ROMESCO

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Romesco, a pepper sauce from the Catalonia region of Spain, is one of our favorite sauces to offer our clients. The roasted red peppers make this sauce bright red which adds a pop of color to any plate or display. It goes well with meat, fish or vegetables and is dairy and gluten-free. We love how versatile Romesco is and all the flavor we can develop so quickly. Feel free to adjust spice to taste and try different nuts for variations on our Romesco!

INGREDIENTS:

- 16 oz jar of roasted red peppers, drained, liquid discarded
- 2 cloves garlic
- ¾ cup whole almonds, roasted
- 3 Tbsp sherry vinegar
- ½ tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp salt

DIRECTIONS:

Place all ingredients in a food processor or blender. Blend to desired consistency. We like ours fairly smooth! Add cayenne, salt and vinegar to taste. Store in the fridge for 1 week or freeze for up to 1 month. Use the Romesco to dress up your sandwiches, as a side to roasted or grilled vegetables or any protein.



Peppercorn Events is a Bergen County based catering company focusing on intimate events, highlighting local, seasonal cuisine. Visit www.peppercornevents.com for more information or email hello@peppercornevents.com.



Where's Our New Logo?

This past fall we asked you to participate in a survey to provide your preferences for design concepts for a new logo for Kol Dorot: A Reform Jewish Community. You delivered in style, with more than 275 responses. Thank you!!! Our Kol Dorot Integration Team is working with your responses to come up with a completely new, fresh, exciting and inspiring design that we can all be excited about! Stay tuned!!



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As past presidents of Temple Beth El of Northern Valley and Temple Beth Or, we stand proudly in the chain of tradition, linked to the generations (*dorot*) that came before us and the generations to come.



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Jerry Simmons
Sandra Sternfeld
Eileen Wolmer

With fond memories of Beth Or's past,
we look ahead to Kol Dorot's future.

Paula & Bill Cantor

A Week of Kindness and Care

Family. Promise. Two separate words with meaning. Together, Family Promise, the words hold out hope for a family in turmoil being given a week of kindness and care. For several years, both TBE and TBO have opened their temple doors and hearts to two, maybe three, families who lost their homes, having undergone unexpected crises. Mothers and children, from babies to teenagers, and sometimes a father, are given a classroom for each family, breakfast each morning, a packed lunch and dinner. All of this done by temple volunteers.

Wendy Weiss has chaired TBE's Social Action Committee since 2012. Nancy Gross has chaired TBO's Family Promise program for the past four years. Wendy has overseen hundreds of volunteers, as many as forty at each session, from children who otherwise do not involve themselves in temple life who may make beds in the classrooms, to teenagers who entertain the little ones, to their parents and grandparents, who make

meals and shop for supplies.

Both temples share the oversight of Family Promise of Bergen County, which sets the parameters: The families arrive in the early evening, eat a nutritious dinner, as provided by a temple member. In the evening, parents chat and relax while the children play with some of the temple's youngsters. The families sleep in separate classrooms, as do the temple volunteers. Family Promise supplies air mattresses and cribs. In the morning, all the families are served breakfast and given a bagged lunch, which they take with them when they are picked up by bus, the parents to their jobs and the children to school. All of this costs each temple nothing. It is based entirely on volunteerism.

Nancy and Wendy are pleased to announce a joint Family Promise week at Temple Beth Or from March 31 through April 7. Stay tuned for Family Promise volunteer opportunities!

Kol Dorot Photo Opp



In November, our congregations enjoyed a combined sisterhood dinner in Montvale (top) and a fun night of music with The Rummies (bottom). Check out FB for more!

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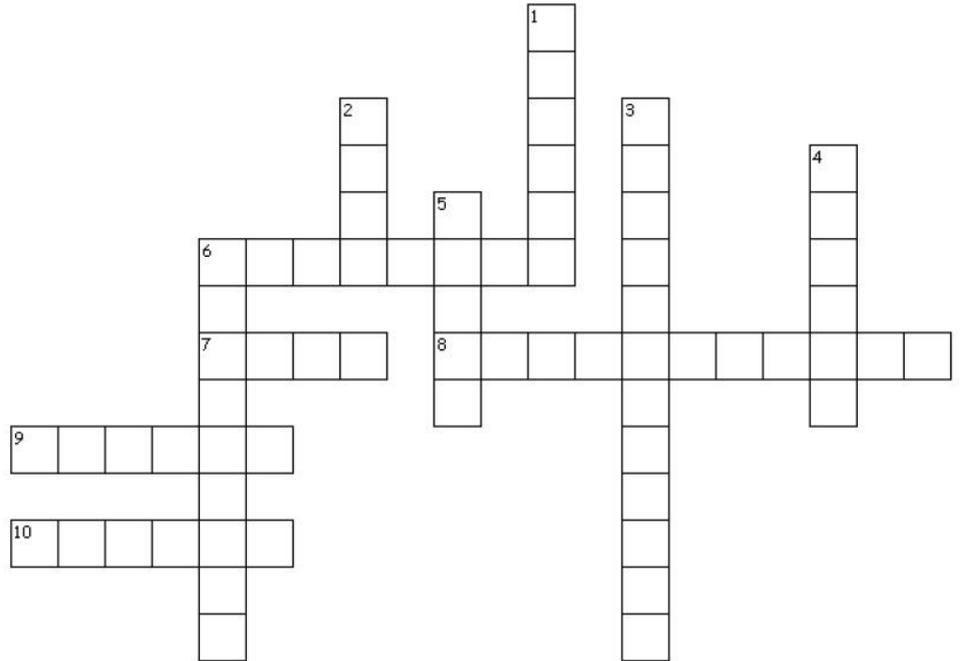
- 6. The (English name of the) month that Tu B'Shevat usually falls in.
- 7. Food popular in Newtonian form.
- 8. Tu B'Shevat reminds us of our responsibility to help protect this.
- 9. Salty additions for pizza or salad.
- 10. This is a nut that grows on trees in Israel.

Down

- 1. A grain you might find in your cereal.
- 2. There are _____ new years in the Jewish calendar.
- 3. A fruit with 613 seeds.
- 4. A fruit found in wine.
- 5. A fruit often eaten dried.
- 6. Tu B'Shevat falls on the _____ day of the month of Shevat.

Answers on page 3

Tu B'Shevat (New Year of the Trees) Crossword Puzzle



Kol Dorot: A Reform Jewish Community
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