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Yom HaAtzma'ut • May 6

418 Spruce Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106  
215.922.6590 Phone  
215.922.6599 Fax

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Starting in **September**, our informative, vibrant, and engaging monthly newsletter will be published as a downloadable PDF from a link on our gorgeous new Web site. This will allow us to save enormous amounts of paper and ink (not to mention time collating, folding, wafer-sealing, labeling, stamping, and mailing) by producing and distributing our newsletter on-line. Members will receive a monthly congregational e-mail alert when a new edition of the *Kesher* is available, and there will be a direct link to the *Kesher* on the Web site.

It is our hope that congregants will quickly come to rely on the Web site for the most up-to-date and accurate information from and about the Synagogue. All upcoming events and programs will be featured on the home page, and soon, we will have the capability to download a calendar of events from the site.

Yes, having the *Kesher* on your computer screen will be an adjustment. You can certainly print it out if you prefer to read it as hard copy. Of course, we will still mail copies, printed at the Synagogue, to members who do not have access to a computer or who specifically ask the office, in writing (or by e-mail), to mail a copy to their home. Please send these requests to Betty by mail or to [bettyv@societyhillsynagogue.org](mailto:bettyv@societyhillsynagogue.org) and include "HARD COPY KESHER REQUESTED" in the subject line of your message. Otherwise, this month's *Kesher* will be the **second-to-last issue** available in hard copy. A **June/July/August** issue will be the **very last edition** that we will print and mail to our members.

We are very proud of this environmentally conscious decision. Thank you for being supportive of it.

## Now Up and Running!

### The 'Members Only' Portion of the SHS Web Site

Members can use this password-protected section of the Web site to receive specific news from other intra-Synagogue groups via participation in several member chat boards. Please see the list of "Forum Topics," and sign on to communicate with the group (or groups) of your choice.

In the "Members Only" section, you can also download the Membership Directory as a PDF file, and you can securely pay Synagogue bills and school tuition using your credit card (for anything over \$15).

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## Study Torah, Feel the Magic

Rabbi Avi Winokur

On the evening of **June 8** and the mornings of **June 9** and **10**, we will celebrate Shavuot. It is one of the major holy days of the Jewish year. It is the third of the so-called pilgrimage holidays, along with Pesah and Sukkot. It is also the most neglected, because it is ritually the least colorful. Although it is purely an agricultural festival in the Bible, the early rabbis identified Shavuot as the day the Torah was given to Moses at Mt. Sinai. It is worth some reflection:

One of my favorite memories from my teenage years was the magic of Saturday mornings. It was not the magic of Saturday morning services. It was a different magic. Almost every Saturday I would accompany my father to the synagogue. We were almost always the first ones there. We would go into the "library" (an alcove off the sanctuary) and set up the table and a few chairs. It was very quiet, just my Dad and me. In my mind's eye I can see the light coming in through the windows, making patterns on the floor as my father and I set up the library. When the regulars came in, we would gather around the table and the magic would begin. Sitting at my father's right hand, I would study Torah with the adults.

My father would rock back and forth, exclaiming excitedly and engaging in animated discussion with the regulars, and I got to be part of it.

Decades later, in the summer of 1996, when my father was confined to a wheel chair and his mind was failing, I visited him. He was pretty much out of it. But for some reason, I got the idea to study Torah with him. It was magic. Sitting out on the patio, with the Torah open before him, it was like he was a different man. As I read, he would correct my Hebrew if, God forbid, I should miss some slight grammatical alteration (*aretz* instead of *eretz*) in my reading. As we discussed the text, his mind became clear. In fact, we could talk about other things as well. Then his mind would cloud up. So we would return to the Torah text and again, he would be lucid for a while. And so it would go until he became too tired.

That December my father died. My last memories of him were studying Torah together.

Not every Torah study experience is quite like my father's and mine, but if you ever speak with people who study Torah regularly, you will be shocked at how extraordinarily compelling Torah study can be. It's not that the people who engage in regular Torah study are more religious than those who don't, or that they "believe in" Torah more, or that they are more likely to believe that God gave the Torah to Moses at Mt. Sinai.

No, it is the process of studying the core text of our heritage together as a community that is the key. Over the years some of the most fervent Torah-study loyalists have run the gamut from deeply skeptical to fervently religious, often in the same Torah study group at the same time. Perhaps the most moving statement of the power of Torah study is a modern midrash on the Sinai story, written by Nancy Lee Gossels around 1980. It takes as its jumping-off point the text in Exodus 19:18-19 that the Torah was given amidst thunder and fire, and the rabbinic understanding that all Jews, even those not yet born, were somehow mysteriously present at Mt. Sinai. Gossels transposes these images into a contemporary key:

Somewhere out of time  
 In the mystery of time  
 Somewhere between memory and forgetfulness,  
 Dimly though  
 I remember how once I stood  
 at Your mountain trembling  
 Amid the fire and the thunder.  
 How I stood there, out of bondage  
 In a strange land and afraid.  
 And You loved me and You fed me  
 And I feasted on Your words.  
 And, yes, I can remember  
 How the thunder was my heart  
 And the fire was my soul.  
 God, I do remember.  
 The fire burns in me anew.  
 And here I am once more  
 A witness to that timeless moment.  
 Present now in the light of Your Torah  
 I am reborn.

The title of this poem? Torah Study. Find the time to join Rabbi Berman and/or me on **Saturday mornings at 9**, or at our **once-a-month group Tuesdays at 5:00 PM**. You, too, may well feel the magic.



## Your Pledge is a Statement that SHS and Its Values Count

Staci Schwartz, President

*Jacov from Russia has just completed a course called, "Improve Your English in a Month," and he was taking the oral final exam. The teacher asked him to spell "cultivate." Jacov spelled the word correctly without hesitation. Then the teacher asked Jacov to use the word "cultivate" in a sentence. Jacov thought for a minute and replied, "Last vinter, on a very cold day, I vas waiting for the bus to take me home, but it vas too cultivate- so I took a taxi."*

I am an avid fan of Rabbi David Gutterman's Torah portion commentaries in the *Jewish Exponent*. The **March 6** editorial was particularly meaningful and relevant to what we are trying to accomplish by raising funds for our current Capital Campaign.

A few paragraphs into the article, Rabbi Gutterman introduced the word, "symballein," which, in ancient times, was a half piece of shard or pottery. During wars, a particular group of people who possessed pieces of pottery that fit with shards from another group's pottery fragments was identified as friends or allies, who were then integrated and connected with the group. He then went on to describe the concept from the Torah that represents "the obligation to contribute a half-shekel." Specifically, he wrote, "In the days of the Temple in Jerusalem, a half-shekel was assessed to be allocated to the central communal infrastructure. Some of the money was used for the upkeep of the holy Temple and some was for communal activity." Imagine! That was before there were even bills to pay for electricity, plumbing, and heating! Each of our ancestors (those who were 20 and older at the time) was required to contribute a half-shekel to be counted as a member of the population.

Now, here is the 3.5-million-dollar question (random number choice, of course): Why was an individual required to contribute a half-shekel rather than a whole shekel? Rabbi Gutterman offered a powerful explanation. He said that the halves of all the shekels would join together to form a whole community of caring and giving. He stated that, "Interconnectedness is our strength and our weight." The contribution of a half-shekel from each person was a statement that "the Jewish community and its values counted."

I invite you to remember these important words and explanations when considering your gift to the Capital Campaign. We *each* need to do our part. We *all* need to assume the collective and communal responsibility for the Campaign's success.

Think shekels...think shards and send in your pledge cards!

## Board Highlights

- Member solicitations for the Capital Campaign continue. Annual Giving letters have gone out, too. These two funds have separate and distinct purposes. Annual Giving is necessary to help with day-to-day operations of the Synagogue, and we cannot neglect seeking these contributions to our operating budget, even while remaining focused on the Capital Campaign. The Board appreciates your understanding of our need to ask for more money than usual. Were it not for this "once-in-a-generation" opportunity to buy the building next door, we would be asking only for our usual Annual Giving pledges.
- Due to the expected expenses incurred from launching the Capital Campaign, the Board is looking at this year's budget with an exceptionally fiscally stringent eye. We are considering creative and aggressive strategies to cut expenses and increase our revenues for the coming year. We also are focusing on strategies to attract new members to SHS.
- The Board is working closely with the Capital Campaign Steering Committee to plan for our anticipated closing on the 430 Spruce Street property in early June. We have raised close to \$1.5 million to date! Our next steps will be determined by how many more pledges we receive by June.
- Mary Ann Stover and Julie Liedman are working to take the Partners for Sacred Places training completed by Julie, me, Peter Piven, Rabbi Winokur, and Cantor Schnitzer to the next level—the application for grants! If we are able to acquire them, these funds will help defray the significant costs necessary to repair our historic building.
- New Board members will be announced in next month's *Kesher*.

—Staci Schwartz, President

# May 2008 Calendar • Nisan/Iyar 5768

PS=Playschool HS=Hebrew School HH=Hebrew High

## 5/1 THURSDAY

Yom HaShoah Program .....8 PM

## 5/2 FRIDAY

Services .....7:30 PM

## 5/3 SATURDAY

Torah Study .....9 AM

Services .....10 AM

Shabbat Study .....10 AM

Tot Shabbat .....11:15 AM

Last Tot Shabbat until September 6  
Lunch & Learn—

God's Unfinished Business

Wine Tasting Event .....7:30 PM

## 5/4 SUNDAY

Sunday School .....9 AM

Nuts & Bolts .....9:15 AM

SS Parents' Class .....9:30A M

Hebrew School .....1 AM

HS Parents' Class .....11:15 AM

## 5/5 MONDAY

Singing Circle .....7 PM

Executive Committee Mtng .....7 PM

## 5/6 TUESDAY

Minyan .....7:15 AM

HS & HH .....4:15 PM

## 5/7 WEDNESDAY

No Playschool

PS Committee Meeting ...8:30 AM

Me'ah .....7 PM

Death & Mourning Class ...7:30 PM

Yom HaZikaron

## 5/8 THURSDAY

No Playschool

Yom HaAtzma'ut



## 5/9 FRIDAY

Hay Class Service .....7:30 PM

Synaplex Weekend

## 5/10 SATURDAY

Torah Study .....9 AM

Traditional Service .....10 AM

Multi-Generational Svc ...10:30 AM

Synaplex Weekend

## 5/11 SUNDAY

Sunday School .....9 AM

Hebrew School .....11 AM

Mothers' Day

## 5/13 TUESDAY

Minyan .....7:15 AM

HS & HH .....4:15 PM

Torah Study .....5 PM

Education Committee Mtng ...7 PM

Melton Preview Session .....7 PM

## 5/14 WEDNESDAY

Death & Mourning Class ...7:30 PM

## 5/15 THURSDAY

Book Club .....1:30 PM

## 5/16 FRIDAY

Reenah Service .....7:30 PM

## 5/17 SATURDAY

Torah Study .....9 AM

Services .....10 AM

Shabbat Study .....10 AM

## 5/18 SUNDAY

Sunday School .....9 AM

Last Day of Sunday School

Nuts & Bolts .....9:15 AM

Hebrew School .....11 AM

Israel 60

## 5/19 MONDAY

ELM Meeting .....12:30 PM

Board Meeting .....7 PM

## 5/20 TUESDAY

Minyan .....7:15 AM

HS & HH .....4:15AM

Last Day of Hebrew School

School Ma'ariv .....5:30 PM

Social Action Meeting .....7:15 PM

## 5/21 WEDNESDAY

Death & Mourning Class ...7:30 PM

## 5/23 FRIDAY

4th Friday Service .....7:30 PM

## 5/24 SATURDAY

Torah Study .....9 AM

Services .....10 AM

Bassman Baby Naming

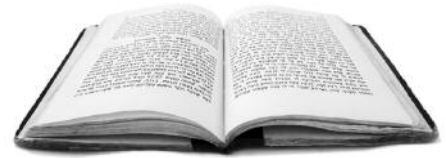
## 5/25 SUNDAY

Building Closed

## 5/26 MONDAY

Building Closed

Memorial Day



## 5/27 TUESDAY

Minyan .....7:15 AM

## 5/29 THURSDAY

PS Graduation

## 5/30 FRIDAY

PS Graduation – Last Day of Playschool

Services .....7:30 PM

## 5/31 SATURDAY

Torah Study .....9 AM

Services and Confirmation ....10 AM

## Interfaith Group Activities

**Sunday, May 4**, the Interfaith Group will visit Historic St. George's Church to observe worship services. The Methodist church is located at 235 North 4th Street. Services begin at 11 AM.

This month we will continue to screen the public television series *Three Faiths, One God*, which examines the three Abrahamic religions and shows how followers are working to achieve understanding across historical divisions. Dates (**all Wednesdays**) and locations are these:

- **May 7, 7 PM–9 PM**, at Old St. Joseph's Church, 321 Willings Alley (between 3rd and 4th Streets, between Locust and Walnut Streets).
- **May 21, 7 PM–9 PM**, Old Pine Presbyterian Church, 412 Pine Street.
- **June 4, 7 PM–9 PM**, at our Synagogue.

*The Interfaith Group is sponsored by our Synagogue, Old Saint Joseph's Church, and Old Pine Presbyterian Church.*

## Birthdays

### MAY 1

Rachel Nelson  
Ari Robkin

### MAY 2

Christine Casper  
Barbara Einhorn  
Jerome Rosenberg

### MAY 3

Pamela Cines  
Daniel Stemmer  
Nicole Wilner

### MAY 4

Fredda Lippes  
Margot Palley

### MAY 6

Daniel Becker  
Etta Krauss

### MAY 7

Daniel Swerdlow

### MAY 9

Blossom Backal  
Larry Spector

### MAY 10

Lucy Jane Bonin  
Douglas Eizen  
Rob Levin  
Daniel Schoenholtz  
Nuriye Uygur

### MAY 11

Jonathan Stein

### MAY 12

Sandra Lazovitz  
Gabriel Procaccino

### MAY 13

Carol Dranoff  
Linda Glass

### MAY 14

Richard Karpf  
Carolyn Saligman

### MAY 15

Sidney Jacoby

### MAY 16

Wayne Spilove  
Merrily Williams

### MAY 17

Andrew Becker  
Joan Roller  
Kinney Zalesne

### MAY 18

Sarah Allison Bach  
Caroline Rosen

### MAY 19

Henry Miller

### MAY 20

Jacob Weinberger

### MAY 21

Samantha Coran  
Jane Friedman  
Elizabeth Heit  
Mindy Robbins

### MAY 22

Rosemarie Weinberg

### MAY 23

Sarah Adams

### MAY 24

Catherine Fischer  
Stuart Galkin

### MAY 25

Bernard Gelman

### MAY 26

Eric Silverman

### MAY 27

Joanna Zuckerman  
Bernstein  
Alan Zuckerman

### MAY 29

Julie Bekier

### MAY 31

Jay Meadway



## Anniversaries

### MAY 7

Adam and Amy Glasofer

### MAY 11

Farrell and Jessica Ender

### MAY 17

Edward and Ronnie Landau

### MAY 22

Michael and Stephanie Naidoff

### MAY 23

Holman and Gail Massey  
Steven and Judith Silberman

### MAY 24

Harvey and  
Eleanor Grossman

### MAY 26

Daniel and Dana Feinberg  
Andrew and Fabiola Miller

### MAY 28

Irving and Sharon Shapiro

### MAY 29

Fredric and Carmen Hayman

### MAY 30

Andrew and Joanna Bottaro  
Irving and Marcia Gitomer  
Jonathan Prokup and  
Catherine Kiefer  
Ira and Lynne Rubenfield

## Learn More About Your Heritage: Free Class will Introduce 2-year Gratz Course

All SHS members and friends are invited to attend a free introductory class presented by the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School of Gratz College from 7 PM to 8:30 PM **Tuesday, May 13** at the Synagogue.

Sponsored by Gratz College, the university-level, interactive discussion is typical of the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School, which seeks to offer adult students a comprehensive, sophisticated, pluralistic text-based program of Jewish study. Developed by the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, it approaches Jewish study from a thematic point of view.

It is essentially the next step beyond SHS's "Nuts and Bolts," plus other basic Judaism courses. Debby Malissa, a Jewish educator and Melton instructor, will teach that evening.

Don't miss this one-time, free class for adult Jewish learners of all backgrounds. This two-year full course will be held in the fall at a Center City location. **For further information**, please contact **Liz Nover**, Director of the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School of Gratz College by phone at **215.635.7300, ext. 143** or e-mail at **LNover@gratz.edu** or **liznover@comcast.net**.

## The Ann Spak Thal School Regarding Next Year, Rounding Out This Year

Merle Salkin, Education Director

By the time parents receive this *Kesher*, registration forms for our next academic year should have arrived by mail. Preregistration is a vital process since the number of students dictates the number of teachers to be engaged. Please return registration forms by **May 15**.

Parents of students in grades three through Confirmation will receive progress reports during the last week in May.

We have had an exciting and successful year because our entire staff is committed to engaging the children of this congregation in meaningful dialog. Our children respond with enthusiasm, imagination, and genuine interest. As a faculty, we are grateful to parents for their continuing interest in Jewish education. We recognize that without your support, our students would not feel so invested in their religious education.

Please join the Congregation on **May 31** as **Meranda Love, Rebecca Hafter, Danielle Schoenholtz, and Reuben Treatman**, our Confirmands, read from Torah and take another step forward into our Jewish community.

Thanks to our teachers Audrey Farber, Diana Holtz, Janine Jakovitz, Rachel Schoenholtz, and Uri Friedman for excellent instruction in our Hebrew School. Blessings on the head of Amy Ignatow, our Hebrew High teacher, and kudos to our Sunday School teachers Jessica Rosenzweig, Rachel Schoenholtz, Stefanie Bock, and Elizabeth Zack. Rounding out our Sunday staff are our superior class aides: Ben Stein, Reuben Treatman, and Meranda Love.

Be a Mitzvah maker! Encourage friends and neighbors to inquire about our School.

### Please Respect Our Neighbors

Remember: Lawrence Court is a public walkway, not a playground. No ball throwing or loud screaming, please.



## Playschool Camp Follows End of School Year

Gloria Parris, Playschool Director

Spring in the Playschool means planning for summer camp. Our camp program has always been a great way for children ages 2 to 4 to spend their summer mornings. The camp season begins on **Wednesday, June 11** and extends for eight weeks through **Thursday, July 31**. Camp is in session Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM. Children can be enrolled on a very flexible schedule. Boys and girls can be signed up for the full eight-week program or they can be enrolled for as little as one week. In addition, children can attend camp any number of days each week.

Our camp program offers a fun-filled summer for the youngsters. Some of our camp activities include indoor and outdoor play, arts and crafts projects, circle time, storytelling, bike-riding, creative movement, camp songs, and water fun in kiddie pools. Each day, a healthy snack is provided by one of our families and the children bring their own dairy lunch. Please contact the Playschool office for more summer camp information.

In addition to planning for the summer, the Playschool children will be busy during their last month of the school year. On **Tuesday, May 13**, we will be going on our fourth trip to the Philadelphia Museum of Art for the Museum Looks and Picture Books program. On **Thursday, May 29** and **Friday, May 30**, we will complete the school year by having graduations for each of our classes.

## Oh Baby! Come Play with Us

Tinukot means babies in Hebrew! Tinukot, SHS's youngest members group (0-24 months, approx.) and their mommies (and daddies) meets monthly in members' homes for a playdate, and at the Synagogue for special activities throughout the year (Sukkot singing with Cantor Neil in the autumn, special Shabbat luncheon following Tot Shabbat in the winter). This is a relatively new group that is still building traction and momentum. Participation is most welcome, especially from new congregants and new mommies!



### • MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

Upcoming playgroups hosted by Juliet and Brian Englander in their home  
**Sunday, May 18**, 9 AM to 11 AM  
**Sunday, June 22**, 9 AM to 11 AM.  
 Please **RSVP** to Juliet at **215.574.0777** and/or at **ozorph@comcast.net**. Enjoy some refreshments. Meet one another. Introduce our little ones. This is low key and welcoming.

### • SPECIAL THANKS TO :

**Jacqui Rick and Michael Yudell**, hosts of April's Tinukot playgroup.  
**Anne Ladenson**, host of May's playgroup. She led Tinukot over the past year, while doing many other things like mothering her three children!

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### (Continued from page 1) Now Up and Running!

While our payment processor technically is PayPal, you DO NOT have to register with PayPal to make a payment through our Web site. Credit cards also can be used by following the, "Don't Have a PayPal Account" link at checkout.

If you are already a member of SHS, please go to the link entitled, "Get Your Password" and type in your current e-mail address. If the SHS office has your most-up-to-date e-mail address on file, a temporary password will then be sent to you. If the office does not have your current e-mail address, please go to the "Register" link under the login window on the homepage and fill out the registration form. The office will process your request, put your information into the system, and then you will be granted access with a temporary password.

If you have any difficulty accessing the "Members Only" section, please don't hesitate to contact, [help@societyhillsynagogue.org](mailto:help@societyhillsynagogue.org), and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

Upon login, you will be able to update your password and e-mail address.

## Contributions

### General Fund

*In Honor of*  
**Marcie and Scot Ziskind's**  
**25th Anniversary**  
*Lev, Miles and Harrison Ziskind*

**Libby Kaiser**  
*Marsba and Stephen Silberstein*

**Jeremy Newberg's Bar**  
**Mitzvah Anniversary**  
*Marsba and Stephen Silberstein*

**A Speedy Recovery**  
**Herman Schwartz**  
*Mildred, Gene and Curt*  
*Lizenbaum*

*In Memory of*  
**Randi Brachfeld**  
*Jane and Ben-Zion Friedman*  
**Betty Zeitzer**  
*Ted and Sheila Zeitzer*

**Enrique Britzmann**  
*Roger and Lore Bryan*

**Lester Eisenstadt**  
*Evelyn Eisenstadt*

### Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

*In Memory of*  
**Joseph Himmelstein**  
*Marcia Gitomer*

**Louis Schwartz**  
*Billy and Sari Love*

**Daniel Abramson**  
*Connie and Jerry Golden*

### Silver Heit Fund

*In Honor of*  
**Marcie and Scot Ziskind's**  
**25th Anniversary**  
*Stanton and Merle Salkin*

**Charlotte Rose Rotter's**  
**1st birthday**  
*Stanton and Merle Salkin*

*In Memory of*  
**Mario Roffe**  
*The Salkin and Myers Families*

### Annual Giving Fund

*In Memory of*  
**Jules B. Altman**  
*Rita Altman*

### Building Fund

*In Memory of*  
**Susan Dictor**  
*Joel, Sarina and Elyssa*  
*Chernock*

*In Honor Of*  
**Torah Study**  
*Giuseppe DiLuca*

### Library Fund

*In Memory of*  
**Martin Casper and**  
**Leonard Toff**  
*Doris Casper*

*Memorial Fund*  
**In Memory of**  
**Ree Silberman, Milton**  
**Silberman, Harry Hyman**  
*Judy and Steve Silberman*

**Sarah Paller**  
*Robert Paller*

# May Kesher

**SOCIETY HILL**  
SYNAGOGUE

418 Spruce Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Phone 215.922.6590

Fax 215.922.6599

[www.societyhillsynagogue.org](http://www.societyhillsynagogue.org)

SOCIETY HILL SYNAGOGUE'S KESHER

## Green Initiatives

### Recycle Your Old Cell Phone

Liz Roberts

**D**id you know you can recycle your old cell phone? Fewer than 20 percent of cell phones are recycled each year, and most people don't know where to recycle them.



Cell phones and accessories are made from such resources as precious metals, copper, and plastics. Recycling the phones can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, keep valuable material out of landfills, and conserve natural resources. Recycling all of the 100 million cell phones ready for end-of-life management in the US would save enough energy to power more than 194,000 US households with electricity for one year, and if they are in good condition, they can be donated to groups that will provide them to the less fortunate.

You can drop off old cell phones at the following retail/service provider locations: AT&T, Sprint, Best Buy, Staples, Office Depot, T-Mobile, Sony Ericsson, and LG Electronics.

Please go to [www.epa.gov/cellphone](http://www.epa.gov/cellphone) for more information!

### Legislation Update

On March 11, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives passed Special Energy Session House Bill 1, which provides funding for new, clean energy development projects that will bring thousands of green jobs to Pennsylvania, save us money in our energy bills, and fight global warming. The bill awaits action in the State Senate, which went back into session in April. For more information visit [www.pennfuture.org](http://www.pennfuture.org).