



**BEND ADULTS**—The first adult b'nai mitzvah class of Temple Beth Tikvah, Bend's Reform congregation, celebrated the completion of the year's preparation when each of the 10 members was called to read from the Torah. Pictured from left: Rabbi Alan Berg, Cantor Ida Rae Cahana (back row) Kathy Schindel, Leslie Conley, Corrie Grudin, (front row) Jeanne Freeman, Beverly Adler, Ceil Hermann, Shari Winicki, Terry Reynolds, Lawrence Schechter and Lorraine Shapiro.

# Ten adults become b'nai mitzvah in Bend

BY KATHY SCHINDEL

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Temple Beth Tikvah, Bend's Reform Jewish congregation, celebrated the b'nai mitzvah of its first adult Hebrew class on June 26.

In May of 2009 two of Temple Beth Tikvah's members, Lorraine Shapiro and Shari Winicki, began discussing the idea of becoming bat mitzvah.

They approached Rabbi Alan Berg with the idea, and then approached Evie Lerner, who was head of the Religious Committee. Berg, willingly agreed to mentor the class, explaining that what was normally a two-year process would be accomplished in one year.

The first b'nai mitzvah meeting with Berg was held last July, with 14 interested members in attendance. Berg gave information about how the program would work, each member shared their personal reasons for wanting to become bar or bat mitzvah, and the class was launched.

Hebrew studies began in earnest in August. Since the vast majority of the class had no Hebrew training, Religious Committee Chair Ann Rosenfield offered to help with beginning Hebrew instruction. As a member of the class who had more Hebrew knowledge than other members, I provided additional coaching, guidance and motivation.

The class met weekly to study Hebrew beginning with the alphabet, then short words and phrases until the reading was fluent enough to start learning the prayers. At first the long list of prayers seemed somewhat daunting, however, with much study, practice and good humor, they persevered until all the prayers were mastered.

The class continued Sunday morning Hebrew sessions throughout the year, practicing the prayers and beginning to read their Torah portions to each other. The group became cheerleaders for each other; each small milestone became a cause for praise, encouragement and celebratory hugs and high-fives.

Berg met with the students each month to discuss the Jewish holidays, history, sacred books, Jewish legal development, the Prophets, Jewish ethics, writing a d'var Torah and much more. He encouraged members to journal the b'nai mitzvah journey, experience each holiday in a very personal way, and to continually reflect on the meaning of this personal passage.

The culmination of the year of study came on June 26 when 10 of the original members were called to the Torah. It has been a memorable year of studying and learning together. Class members worked hard, encouraged each other and laughed together along the way. Through the process they developed strong bonds with each other that will last as they continue learning together and participating fully in the congregation.

Temple Beth Tikvah is a Jewish congregation founded in 2008 in Bend. Temple members come from Bend and all of the surrounding communities including Redmond, Sisters, LaPine and Sunriver. Officially affiliated with the Union for Reform Judaism, it is the first Reform synagogue in Central Oregon. Members come from a range of Jewish backgrounds, including Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist and Renewal. Interfaith families and Jews by choice are welcome in the community.