

Rakefet News

New Features in Rakefet for 2005

By Vic Rosenthal

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We've added a lot to Rakefet since the last CD release. Those of you who have downloaded intermediate updates from our Web site already have most of the new features, but if you haven't, you will be surprised at the number of changes. As always, most of them were made as a result of *your* suggestions. Keep them coming, to wishlist@rakefet.com.

Here are just a few of the new features (see **Help / What's New** and the detailed change list on our website for more):

Database

It is now possible to **tag database entries from the Relationships Queries function**. This is a tremendous increase in the capabilities of the Relationship functions, since it allows you to take actions -- such as printing letters, coding, billing, etc. -- on the basis of relationships.

Individual salutation fields have been added for all adults and children. You can use this feature to start letters with informal nicknames, Hebrew names, etc.

By popular demand, the **Address Book report (140) now includes two entries for families in which member 1 and 2 have different last names** (the member 2 entry is "see member 1").

School stuff

The **Class List report (163)** now can include cell phone numbers and family email addresses. More flexibility in selecting fields to include in this report has been added.

A new **Classes report (164)** that displays information about classes has been added.

The Filter now allows you to **select an arbitrary set of school classes** instead of one or all.

A function has been added to **un-enroll tagged students** from school.

Scheduling

A **Scheduling Maven** has been added to **automatically add or delete recurring events**.

Mishloach manot feature

You can determine who has the 'Reciprocate for Mishloach Manot' flag set, and you can clear all of them or a subset with one click.

Receivables

Lots of improvements have been made to the **semi-automatic Allocate Payments function**:

- 1) Double-clicking a payment amount cell now automatically allocates as much of the check as possible to pay off the balance for that line.
- 2) Holding the mouse over the name pops up a hint containing the family's address.
- 3) You can now enter donations in accounts that do not have a balance.
- 4) UK users can now link Gift Aid declarations in Semiautomatic Allocate Payments.
- 5) A right mouse-click menu has been added to allow for modifications of memo for each line, etc.

The **Cash Receipt list (248) can now be sorted by family** as well as by receipt number.

General Ledger

It's now possible to **make accounts inactive** even if they have transactions. Inactive accounts will not appear on various lists for account selection, etc.

Journal Entries now use the standard account selection box which includes incremental search.

Payables

Finally, you can **merge multiple invoices** for one vendor to print a single check.

A **post-without-printing** option has been added to check printing functions.

Per-check totals have been added to the **Vendor Detail report (451)**.

Miscellaneous

Font sizes and browser row heights have been increased throughout Rakefet for improved readability.

I've left out a number of changes because of space limitations. Every change, including minor report modifications, bug fixes, performance improvements, etc. will be found on our change list. Just go to www.rakefet.com and click the link for Change List.

-Vic

Dear Lise & Melissa

Have a question?



"Is there a better way to handle this?"

~

"I'll keep it quick and simple..."



Just Ask!

Dear Lise,
The covert feature of tax deductibility is pretty cool. Whenever we have a journal dinner, I just enter the fair market value of one dinner and then for each ticket purchase, I indicate how many dinners the check covers. I really thought I had it nailed. Then we had a silent auction. We're selling different items at different prices—sometimes the purchaser really gets something for less than it's worth, but sometimes two people get into a bidding war and we end up selling some tacky mess for well over its fair market value. Any suggestions?

Albuquerque Auctioneer

Dear Alba,
The total fair market value of the transaction is arrived at by multiplying the covert by the number of units. So set the covert of the Silent Auction income account to \$10 (or \$100 if you're auctioning really pricey stuff) and vary the number of units in each item to arrive at the fair market value. If a fruit basket is worth \$20, you'll enter 2 units and the goods and service amount will be \$20. If the person paid \$50, he's made a tax deduction of \$30. If he only paid \$20, he hasn't made a deduction at all. Always assume that the person paid you at least what the item was worth.

Dear Lise,
When we have a little program I always record people's payments into the income account and write our expense checks out of the same account. I figured, why have two accounts when one will do? and running a Report 256 will always tell me right away what we've net-

ted on it. Last week the program chair asked me for a list of all the people who had paid so he could get a head count and was very annoyed that the report was sprinkled with payments in parentheses. Is there a better way to handle this?

Ora the Organizer

Dear Ora,
We call this in the trade a cloaca account. A cloaca is an orifice in simple life forms used for both ingestion and excretion. Good for amoebae, not so good for synagogue bookkeeping. Make a separate expense account and link the income account and the expense account to a fund. Running 256 for only that fund will tell you your net just as easily as the cloaca method, but you will also have the option of looking at the income by itself or the expenses.

I applaud your desire to keep your chart of accounts from getting overgrown. One option is, if you have a few small-scale non-repeating programs throughout the year, you can have an account called Misc. Program Income and Misc. Program Expenses that you use for each one. Probably all your activity takes place during a pretty short time period, so limiting it to the 6 weeks surrounding a particular program will limit you to that program only, and not its predecessor or successor.

A variation on that method is, while you're working on the program, it can have its own accounts, but when you've wrapped it up, you can use the

Change Account Numbers feature in Maintenance to merge them into the master accounts, of course, income into income and expense into expense. Naturally, if every year you have a scholar in residence or a journal dinner, you would keep those accounts active for purposes of comparison.

--Lise



Dear Melissa,
I created a letter template on a slow afternoon and added in some classy graphics in the header—a scanned photograph of our synagogue and one of the preschool kids lighting the Hanukkah candles. I made one copy and it looked great!! When I ran the letter for everybody (naturally, on a crazy Friday morning), the computer kept locking up. What does the computer care how many letters I'm printing?

Cutnpaste in Columbus

Dear Cutie,
I'll keep it quick and simple... When you scan pictures, you can scan them for different types of uses. The different types of uses can range from posting them on a web page to magazine or billboard print. Basically small to really huge and detailed! So, for your purpose, I suggest scanning these pictures at a lower resolution, possibly 100-200 dpi, and saving the graphic files as JPG or JPEG.

-Melissa



Technical Topics

Malware

By Vic Rosenthal

As if there aren't enough annoyances and problems inherent in the hardware and software of our computers, we have to deal with *malware*, which can be defined as digital vandalism. There are several types of malware floating around today, and new versions of them crop up from day to day. Here are some of them and how you can protect yourselves against them:

Viruses and worms are unwanted programs that spread from computer to computer by email and other means. The distinction isn't clear-cut, but one definition is that viruses may attach themselves to other program files on your computer, while worms spread from computer to computer without modifying programs. Either way, the results of infection can be highly unpleasant. The unwanted program can damage your operating system, delete files, even wipe out the contents of your hard disk. One common syndrome is that computers with broadband internet connections are turned into 'zombies', controlled by hackers and used to send spam email or to participate in attacks on websites that the hackers don't like. Many viruses or worms will access your email address book and send copies of themselves to some or all of the addresses there. When this happens they often use some of these addresses as the 'From' address of their emails, which may fool the recipients into thinking the malware came from someone they know.

A virus or worm may arrive as an email attachment which you need to click on in order to become infected; but some of them can be spread simply by opening an infected email. Others have been transmitted by programs which search the internet for open ports, establish communication, and upload the malware! All you need to do to become infected is to be connected to the internet without protection.

Another form of malware is **spyware**. Spyware consists of programs which keep track of a user's behavior and transmit a report to someone somewhere. This can be as (relatively) innocuous as noting web sites visited for marketing purposes, or as dangerous as logging keystrokes to capture credit card numbers and passwords. Spyware can take the form of a worm, or it can spread by tagging along with downloaded software. Wonder why they are advertising free screen savers or email icons? What do you think you get along with these 'freebies'?

How can you protect yourself and your organization against digital vandalism? Here are several steps that you can take:

- 1) **Keep the operating system patched.** You should make sure that your Windows systems incorporate Microsoft's critical security updates. This mostly

applies to Windows NT and XP, but there are some security updates for Windows 98. You can do this by running the Windows Update function. I personally do not allow this to happen automatically, preferring to know what is happening to my system and when!

- 2) **Don't use Microsoft Outlook or Outlook Express for email.** Outlook is the most popular Windows email client, so it is the biggest hacker target. If you must use one of these programs, be absolutely sure you have installed all the Microsoft security patches for it.
- 3) **Install a software firewall.** A software firewall is a program that prevents hackers from accessing your ports from outside and prevents spyware programs from 'phoning home'. There is a built in firewall in Windows XP with Service Pack 2, but it only protects against inbound connections. Turn it off and install a two-way firewall.
- 4) **Install an antivirus program that is updated automatically.** You must use a program that scans all incoming email and programs that you install for viruses. Ours checks for updates once an hour; if you have an antivirus program that is not updated automatically, you are not protected against new and modified viruses which are constantly being created.
- 5) **Install an antispyware program and run it regularly.** You may be surprised at the number of tracking programs that you have accumulated.
- 6) **If you have a broadband (DSL, cable, satellite, etc.) internet connection, use a NAT router.** 'NAT' means 'network address translation'. It allows you to make your individual computers inaccessible from outside of your network.
- 7) **Be careful!** Do not click on email attachments when you are not sure what they are. Remember, the return address of an email containing malware is almost always faked. Don't download free software, screen savers, etc. unless you know that they are OK. There is a large amount of 'freeware' available which is not loaded with spyware, but you should research anything that you want to download to be sure.

At Transparent Software, we do ALL of these (it would be a Very Bad Thing if we distributed malware to our customers), and you should too. If the technical aspects seem overwhelming, get a professional to help you.



The Buck Stops Here!

By Lise Rosenthal

A synagogue is a unique sort of business—and it is a business, in addition to being a place of worship. If it can't function like a business, the congregants will end up davening in the dark, or out on the sidewalk! Its special character is the result of good cooperation and communication between volunteer board members and paid administrative workers. What is the ideal division of labor between the treasurer and the paid bookkeeper? There is no one answer—it depends on many factors: the skill level of each one, the amount of time that each has available, and—let's face it—the amount of trust that the synagogue places in its employees. In this last, it is possible to err in either direction. Treating a dedicated and trustworthy employee like a potential thief will result in a high turnover in personnel and the inability to keep good employees. Misplaced confidence and an absence of supervision is an invitation to disaster that is ruinous both to finances and morale.

A knowledgeable and trustworthy bookkeeper can both log in the receivables and produce the payables. He or she should not be a signatory on the checks. There should be two signers, and checks should not be signed until they are made out. This gives two board members the opportunity to approve the expenditure. If the employee is new and unsupervised, the treasurer may wish to Xerox each income check and make the deposit himself, allowing the employee to log the payments into Rakefet from the copy. Whoever actually goes to the bank, payments should be logged in as of the date of deposit. This produces a one to one correlation between the deposits shown on the monthly bank statement and Rakefet's Check/Deposit Register (260). A competent bookkeeper can certainly reconcile the bank accounts in Rakefet but the treasurer should compare the documentation from the bank and from the computer. At this point, (before the board meeting), the treasurer can also look at the income and expense accounts to which the money was allocated and perhaps say, "I don't think we should call this a hospitality expense; put it against the Seder Pesach."

I have spoken to many bookkeepers in the course of my job here. The vast majority are intelligent, diligent and scrupulously honest. It has also occasionally been my unhappy task to help a treasurer sort things out after gross incompetence or outright theft. I will say that in every case of deliberate theft, this was accomplished, not by finding a way to siphon off the synagogue's income, but by the employee writing herself checks. This can, of course, be prevented by taking the simple precautions described above. In one instance the employee knew that her board members went over the income/expense reports with a fine tooth comb, but since they did not ask her for a balance sheet, her "loaning" herself thousands of dollars into an asset account went undetected for a few months.

One thing is certain: the buck stops at the treasurer's desk. He must be as familiar with the ins and outs of the synagogue money as he is with those of his own household. This can be accomplished without annoying and insulting micromanagement, by informed perusal of a selection of reports combined with a reality check with the bank statements. A good procedure is, after the last income and expenses are recorded for the month, the bookkeeper can e-mail a backup to the treasurer; he can restore it to the Rakefet he has running on his home computer and run the reports he will be showing to the board, anticipating any questions that might arise ("Why was our telephone bill so high this month?") and researching the answers. When he brings these reports to the board meeting every month, he will be confident that they are both clear and accurate.

What reports should the treasurer bring to a board meeting every month?

A good starting point is:

1. A balance sheet (267), backed up with a restricted fund summary (252) if your congregation has a significant proportion of its assets in restricted funds
2. An income/expense summary (255) for the last complete month
3. The budget report that your board feels the most comfortable with, probably either a month to date/year to date (264) for the last complete month or the budget progress report (270), either one summarized by budget category.

Why not the detailed reports subtotaled by category? Isn't that better?

No, it's more than the Sisterhood and Men's Club reps need or want to know. As the treasurer, you'll have printed the detail reports, both budget and income/expense, and discussed them in your committee. You'll have them on hand at the board meeting in order to answer questions, but no need to burden the entire board with so much detail.

What about the Receivables by Family?

Again, that's something that should remain in committee—to cut down on lashon ha-ra if nothing else.

The treasurer and the bookkeeper need to work together with mutual trust, respect and clear communication in order to keep your synagogue in the black!



--Lise

What's going on in that office?

Has there been a change of the guards in your office?
 New staff?
 New board?
 Or have you moved and have a new address?

I just wanted to drop a note to remind you all that if you have had any significant changes in way that we should contact your organization to please let us know. It will only take a few seconds to drop us a line... and well worth the update!

Did you think I was going to ramble on about our office?
 No, not here...
 But keep reading on. You'll find it soon enough!

Cheers!

-Melissa



MIXED BAG WORD SCRAMBLE



1. _____
 AEYPWSR

2. _____
 LAWRLEIF

3. _____
 URISV

4. _____
 AMSP

5. _____
 RASERTRUE

6. _____
 UBGTED

7. _____
 RPEOKEKOEB

8. _____
 LNAEABC

9. _____
 GGEYOASNU

10. _____
 TONEIQSU

Tech Schmech!

By Melissa

Tech Schmech!

Say it ain't so!

Did you know that we have files on you?

Yup, we sure do!

Not like the FBI, or how they do on CSI Miami or Las Vegas...

But we do have an entire database filled with the history of our clients and their relationship with Rakefet. Our tech support staff documents when you call or e-mail, who works in your office, and what type of technical support needs your office has.

When you contact us for technical assistance, please don't feel awkward when we ask your name, organization, and city. Also, so many of you calling in seem surprised if we don't recognize your voices. Still identify yourselves. It can get quite hectic in the tech department and you would be surprised how similar you all can sound by noon. So just make it simple and tell us who you are again. And when you think about it, it is a very good thing. We document your concerns and needs, as well as knowing possibly who should be using Rakefet and should not. We are here for your organization's best interest. So the next time you call or e-mail... Exclaim aloud with great pride who and where you are! When e-mailing, please provide a subject header like the name of your organization, "Tech Support" or "Rakefet". Subject headers like "Help Me!" or "Call Me!" can get mistaken for SPAM... And we don't want to lose you to SPAM because that just ain't kosher!

Many regards from your friendly tech support gal!

-Melissa



**Hello,
Give me
Rakefet!**



How to Keep your Bank Rec from Becoming a Bank Wreck

By Lise Rosenthal



Keeping on top of your bank reconciliation is a lot like going to the gym—when you keep on top of it, it's easy to continue; when you let it go, the temptation is to take your cue from Scarlett O'Hara* and go do something really important, like take out the trash or water the plants.

A few simple tricks can help you keep this project from becoming an overgrown sea monster. When you go into Special/Reconcile Bank Account and select your account, keep those itchy fingers off your mouse until you've compared the Statement Balance to the Computed Balance to the starting balance on your paper statement. They should all be the same—because that's the number you reconciled to a month ago. If your Statement Balance and your Computed Balance are no longer the same, someone has done something since the last time you reconciled, and, since you're in a hole, lay down your shovel. Starting to tag the items on the current statement will only get you in deeper. What could be responsible for discrepancy?

1. First look at the two handy fields below, Cleared Checks and Cleared Deposits. If you reconciled last month, all cleared items went out of the bank rec program. If there are numbers in either field, scroll down till you see what they are and figure out why they've been cleared. Do not discount the possibility of someone other than you fooling around without knowing what they're doing. If these items had not cleared by the time of your reconciliation, untag them.

2. If you had to edit an item that had already been cleared, even if you never touched the amount—say it was allocated to the wrong account or you misspelled a word in the memo—that item must be reevaluated and will reappear in the bank rec program. If you reconciled successfully at the end of May, and suddenly there is a single income item dated February, suspect that it was edited. If you remember doing it and you know you didn't edit the amount, go ahead and clear it. Indeed, when you are doing the editing, you will get a warning message that the item has already been cleared. The best procedure is to immediately go into the bank rec program, clear the item, making the Statement Balance again match the Computed Balance.

3. Assuming that there is a new/old mystery item in the bank rec program and you have no idea how it got there, run the check deposit register for the time period and haul out the paper bank statement. If the bank says you deposited \$5378 on February 13, and Rakefet says that, including this item you deposited \$5378 on February 13, you can pretty confidently clear the item. If the cleared deposit WITHOUT the mystery item is equal to what the bank says was deposited, then call in Jack Webb and find out who entered this and what they were trying to accomplish.

4. Sometimes someone expended money on the synagogue's behalf and says he wants to make a donation of it and wants tax credit for it; he may tell you to enter it as a payment because only a cash payment generates a donation receipt. Morally this is correct, but it wreaks havoc with bookkeeping. The thing to do is to reimburse him from the appropriate expense account and have him endorse it back to you. At this point it really is his money and you enter it as a payment or donation from him in his account. Since you are really putting it in the bank, you will not be doing violence to your bank deposit. Remember, Payments and Donations mean cash money (or plastic) going into the bank account.

5. If someone edited the amount on an item that had previously cleared, and the new entry is accurate, that means that you reconciled last month on the basis of a false assumption. This is the most difficult tangle to get into, because you will need to go back until you've got Rakefet and the bank in agreement and then move forward.

6. If you can't make it make sense, leave it for awhile. If you close the bank rec program, your tags will remain as they are. Sometimes your subconscious goes to work, and the next morning, you easily flush out the discrepancy that was driving you nuts the afternoon before.

7. If nothing helps, and we're talking pennies, it's probably not worthwhile to continue pulling your hair out. Journalize the offending amount into or out of the bank account (remember a debit makes the bank balance bigger and a credit makes it smaller) and when you clear your journal entry you'll be in balance. Remember this is a last resort and certainly should not be happening very often. If your accountant sees large adjusting entries every month, she'll have a stroke.

Rosh ha Shana is the time for a *heshbon nefesh*, a searching of the soul with an eye to ethical changes. The beginning of the civil year, while not as spiritual a season, is a great time to sign yourself back up at the gym and keep on top of your bank reconciliation. In its humble way, the feeling you get when you see the message, "The account is now in balance," is a real adrenaline rush. The world has just become a little more harmonious and, who knows? Perhaps the Meshiach just came a little closer.

*As Rhett was walking away into the fog, she fortified herself with the thought that, Tomorrow is another day.



--Lise

Rakefet Bingo!

Rakefet Bingo!

Do you keep falling asleep during technical support calls? What about those long boring training calls? Here is a way to change all of that!

How to play:

Before each technical support call or training session, print out your own game card.

Check off each block when you hear these words or phrases. When you get five blocks horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, stand up and shout, "I LOVE RAKEFET!"



Chart of Accounts	Payables	Help File	Filter	Close with the Door
General Ledger	Journal Entry	Reports	E-mail	Database Detail
Print	Balance Sheet	Rakefet BINGO (free square)	Budget	Funds
Letter Writer	Check Integrity	Refund/Reversal	Allocate Payments	Sort
Mass Tagging	Family Codes	Jewish Calendar	Toggle Maintenance Mode	End of Year Processing

Calling for Tech Support

By Lise Rosenthal

How Not to Call for Tech Support

Us: Transparent Software. This is Lise

Phone: It's doing it again.

Us: Excuse me, who am I speaking to?

Phone: Tiffany

Us: From what synagogue are you calling?

Phone: The temple.

Us: And which temple is that?

Phone: Temple Beth-El.

Us: In which city?

Phone: New York

Us: I'm not finding you, what's your zip code?

Phone: Well, we're not exactly in New York, I didn't think you'd know where New Jersey was.

Us: OK, got it, now what's the problem?

Phone: I talked to that man yesterday when I was getting the error message and he told me to do something, but now it's happening again.

Us: What's happening again?

Phone: The error message. Can I put you on speaker?

Us: No. Please read me the error message.

Phone: It's got a big red stop sign that says Warning. COME IN!!! THE DOOR'S OPEN!!

Us: What else does it say?

Phone: That's all. (In the third drawer of Selma's desk.)

Us: No it's not. What else does it say?

Phone: I don't know. I hit OK. It's gone. Can I put you on hold?

Us: Maybe you'd better call back when you're not so busy.

Phone: No!! I have to get these reports or my boss will

kill me. And they're not right.

Us: What's not right?

Phone: The numbers are all wrong.

Us: What report is that?

Phone: That one my boss always tells me to give him before the board meeting. The numbers are all wrong.

Us: Is this a general ledger report? A receivables report?

Phone: It's that report about when people paid last time and how much it was.

Us: Oh, the Member Status Report. Reports/Receivables/250. Go ahead and pull it up.

Phone: Oh no! Wait a minute! Why is it doing that?

Us: Why is it doing what?

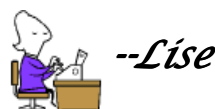
Phone: Oy gevalt! Wait a minute! Oh no! Wait a minute!

Us: Please describe to me what is happening.

Phone: Listen, do you have an 800 number? They're always complaining that my calls to you take so long.

How to call for Technical Support

Please let us know your name and the synagogue you're calling from, including the city and state. Tell us what version of Rakefet you're running (it's in the blue strip on top of the program) and what version of Windows you're using. If you get an error message, leave it on the screen (or, if that's not possible, copy it down exactly) while you call and let us know what you were doing immediately prior to receiving it. This does not mean that you caused it, but it helps us pin down the problematic sequence of events. If you're going to call for tech support, let the machine take incoming calls. Always call from in front of the computer. It might be quieter from your home after dinner, but we can't ask you to do the diagnostics that will pinpoint your problem.



Save Time! Avoid Tsuris!

Newsletter 2005

Writers:

Lise Rosenthal
Vic Rosenthal

Editor, Layout, Graphics, & Other Misc.

Contributions of great
impending interest and
importance:

Melissa Wolfmann



Questions that we here in this office often ask throughout the day:

1. Is the coffee ready?
2. Will it be slow today?
3. Who stole my pen?
4. Why is it so busy?
5. Will my appointment call today?
6. What color will Melissa's hair will be today?
7. Who let that cat in here?
8. Do our customers know that there is a Lise and there is a Melissa? That we are not one morphed persona... (Hmm, I wonder.)
9. Do our customers really know where Fresno is? Or are they just pretending to know?
10. Is there any coffee left? And why am I so hungry, it's only 9:37 a.m.
11. How will the coffee pot fill up with more coffee?
12. We have more demos, who will take them to the post office... ?
"Not me, I have six back to back appointments."
"No, not me! I am making coffee and doing tech calls."
"Uh, okay. I'll go. Do we need more stamps?"
"YES!"
13. Where did Vic go?
14. Why is that cat eating my pen?
15. Is it lunch yet?
16. I wonder how many people called today for support?
17. Has anyone seen that FAX I am expecting?
18. Who's on line two?
19. Why am I hungry? Did I eat lunch?
20. Hssss, why are those humans always asking stupid questions?



Famous Customer Quotes for 2004

1. "Hi, I need some help."
2. "I am calling from the temple."
3. "Where's Fresno? I have never been there."
4. "I made a backup and it disappeared."
5. "Remember, I called you three weeks ago about this...?"
6. "C, colon, blacksplash, Rakwin, blacksplash, data, blacksplash."
7. "Can you hold, my cell phone is ringing?"
8. "See here... On my screen..."
9. "My computer gave me a message and I can't find it."
10. "You don't understand, I work for a synagogue. We do things different here."