
Tikvah Talk

Vol. 33 Iss. 7

Congregation B'nai Tikvah Walnut Creek, CA

March 2014

From Where I Stand

By Rabbi Raphael Asher



A year ago my mother's faculty of speech was impaired by a stroke. Her thoughts remain clear, but it's a chore to get out a complete sentence. It came as a pleasant surprise, then, at last year's Seder to hear her sing all the Passover melodies from the Yontov Kiddush to Chad Gadya. Music, it seems, resides in a more secure and more durable part of the brain.

Synagogue music occupies a special place in my own consciousness because when I was very young my mother was the Temple choir in our small southern shul. While my father delivered sermons that went way over my head, my mother's soft soprano voice was teaching me "Mi Chamocha" and "Adon Olam." That's just one reason why I've never underestimated the importance of the Cantor in services from Aviva Katzmann to Cantor Richards and Cantor Chabon. We rabbis may stir or fry the mind and heart, but music soothes even the most secular beast.

As we anticipate this year's Purim (March 15) and Passover Seders (April 14 and 15) we should be attuned and cognizant of the power of a familiar melody. This year's Purimspiel will include a Beatles' playlist—and we should by all means acknowledge the impact of popular music on the human spirit. However, it is music of our own folk and liturgical traditions which can clear a path in our cerebral gray matter, even when our speech and intellect might fail us.

Please join us for Purim when we'll dine, drink, and play "With a Little Help from Our Friends," and Haman sings "I Want to Kill Your Clan!" And this year's Haggadah Helper will be Saturday morning, April 12th when we'll focus on the Passover melodies that help otherwise argumentative people around the Seder table to harmonize and get along.

Reflections...

By Cantor Jennie Chabon



On Saturday night, March 15th, we will celebrate Purim. Purim's date on the Hebrew calendar is the 14th of Adar. Everyone associates Purim with costumes, groggers, and the famous Purim spiel, but there must be more depth to the holiday than silliness and hamentaschen. It's true that on no other holiday are we encouraged to drink (even get drunk!), send and receive gifts, dress up in costume, and make noise in the sanctuary, but is that really all there is to it?

The story that we read in *Megillat Esther* is deceptively simple. It opens with the banishment of Queen Vashti and the beauty contest in which Esther is chosen to become the new queen. The courtier, Haman, becomes the new prime minister, but Mordecai, Esther's uncle, refuses to bow down to him. Fueled by anger at Mordecai for his disobedience, Haman convinces King Ahasuerus to order a decree calling for the massacre of the entire Jewish population in the kingdom. Mordecai and Esther then realize that it is their job to save the Jewish people. Esther entrances King Ahasuerus with wine and food and then reveals that she is Jewish and asks him to save her people from wicked Haman's plan. Haman is hanged, the Jews are saved and Purim becomes an annual holiday of drinking and merriment.

Simple story, simple message, right? Not necessarily. In order to understand the deeper meaning of Purim, it is important to look at the holiday through a historical lens. Most scholars and historians agree that the Purim story is based on the Jewish community that was living in Persia in the years following the Babylonian exile from Jerusalem, ca. 515 BCE. Once the shock of the exile had worn off, the Jews assimilated very well into Persian society. They were successful and comfortable and well-respected in their new world. In fact, when the Temple was rebuilt and they were able to return to Jerusalem, most Jews chose to stay in "exile"—their new home.

This is the context of the Purim story. Looking at the story from this perspective, it is interesting to consider who Esther and Mordecai were before it became their responsibility to save the Jewish people. They were most probably non-religious, assimilated Jews living happily in Persian society. How do we know this? It is unlikely that a religious girl, especially someone from the minority of

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Congregation B'nai Tikvah is a Reform congregation which, through personal attention, provides to its members an extended family. The congregation fulfills its members' spiritual needs, fosters their Jewish identity, promotes the perpetuation of Judaism and its members' Jewish education, and encourages a commitment to full participation in Temple life.

Raphael W. Asher, *Rabbi*
Jennie Chabon, *Cantor*
Stephen Richards, *Cantor Emeritus*
Judy Blum, *Temple Administrator*
Phil Hankin, *Director of Education*

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CONGREGATIONAL OFFICERS

President	Harry Wittenberg
Vice President	Dan Lapporte
Vice President	Glenn Gould
Vice President	Jared Goldin
Secretary	Bob Stern
Treasurer	John Rubinfeld
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Todd Young	

Upcoming Bat Mitzvah

Lauren Assael
Daughter of Melissa and Brian Assael
 Saturday, March 8, 2014

Shabbat Services begin at 10 am.
 The Congregation is invited to attend.

PASSOVER
at the CBT Gift Shop

Passover begins Monday, April 14

The Gift Shop will have its Passover display out
 Sunday morning April 6th and 13th
 9:00 am - 12:00 pm.

Items on display include:
paper plates and napkins
(a good idea if you're hosting a large seder),
Seder plates, Haggadot,
matzah holders,
candle holders and candles,
story books and cookbooks,
Elijah and Miriam cups,
and much more. (but NO FOOD!)

Support CBT!
Shop Your Gift Shop first!

Tikvah Talk

Tikvah Talk is published 11 times a year and is distributed free of charge to anyone expressing an interest in Congregation B'nai Tikvah. All news items are due the 10th of each month. Please submit articles electronically, if possible, to Congregation B'nai Tikvah, at office@tikvah.org (subject *Tikvah Talk*) or by mail to 25 Hillcroft Way, Walnut Creek, CA 94597, (925) 933-5397.

President's Message

By Harry Wittenberg



One thing about being president of our congregation is that you get a bird's eye view of all of the happenings that go on at our temple. Another thing is you also get to work with a great group of board members who care about our temple. And with all of that flurry of activity and energy, it kind of feels like Spring at CBT. Let me name just

a couple of events going on in the next month: The Purim Spiel based on music from the Beatles (pizza and games, too) and the Songs of Love and Justice Concert featuring Cantor Jennie Chabon, Cantor Linda Hirschhorn, and our fabulous choir.

In February we had strong support for the Winter Nights shelter, Learning Day by Phil Hankin, our clergy and Religious School Teachers, plus Shabbat Shira that brought in so many of you on a Saturday morning of incredible song and spirituality.

Whenever I get someone's ear, I like to talk about the power of Relational Judaism. What is it? It's a movement among Reform congregations to build relationships between members in a congregation. It's not about more programs; it's about opportunities for members to talk with each other, get to know each other over time so that they become familiar with each other and provides an incentive to come to shul, not just to worship and learn, but to just hang out and enjoy each other's company. This year I plan to do more of that. I hope you will take advantage of those opportunities to meet and greet.

This is also our year to celebrate so many things that have sustained us as a temple and will continue to allow us to grow and thrive. There is great work going on planning Rabbi Asher's retirement. I don't want to call a "Spoiler Alert!" and tell you the specifics, but suffice it to say, there will be something for everyone to get involved in honoring Rabbi Asher and all he done for our congregation over the last 32 years. Watch your email for announcements - you won't want to miss any of them! Believe me!

As we move forward into the year, the Board has been working on some things we need to focus on in order to sustain our member's vibrancy and energy, build our membership and get the word out about our small corner of heaven. Some of the things we're discussing is how to market ourselves better in the community, how to get unaffiliated parents of pre-school children to look at CBT as their new congregation, how to increase the number of opportunities for our members to build stronger ties within our community and outside into the broader Jewish community.

But like any chemical reaction, there needs to be a catalytic

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Turn It, Turn It

By Phil Hankin, Director of Education



Here are clues to the following riddle:

Significance: Remembers the defeat of a plot to exterminate the Jews

Observances: Public reading of a book of while "blotting out" the villain's name

Length: 1 day

Customs: Costume parties; drinking; eating fruit-filled triangular cookies

What am I? Hopefully you answered the Jewish holiday of Purim. If so, you won a lifetime supply of Hamentaschen from Costco. What significance does this holiday hold on the Jewish calendar? Purim is one of the most joyous and fun holidays as it commemorates a time when the Jewish people living in Persia were saved from extermination. But why all the revelry and hoopla? Because we are commanded to "eat, drink, and be merry." We are commanded to boo and hiss and attempt to blot out the name of Haman at his very mention during the public reading of the Scroll of Esther. And according to the Talmud, we are required to drink until we cannot tell the difference between "cursed be Haman" and "blessed be Mordecai" (though opinions differ as to exactly how drunk that is). When else can you come to Temple drunk and be loud and obnoxious and dress up in costume? I love this holiday because of its irreverent nature. The High Holidays are solemn and reflective, Passover has its dietary restrictions, and Sukkot makes us eat and sleep outside for a week. But on Adar 14 we party in the streets like its Mardi Gras.

For all the joy on this holiday, Jewish custom tells us that we cannot fully enjoy the day without remembering those less fortunate than ourselves. Therefore, we are commanded to send out gifts of food or drink, and to make gifts to charity. The sending of gifts of food and drink is referred to as *Mishloach Manot* (lit. sending out portions). It is always the balance that we Jews keep in order to make the world a better place.

Finally, it is also customary to hold carnival-like celebrations on Purim, to perform plays and parodies, and to hold beauty contests. To this end, Congregation B'nai Tikvah will be holding Purim festivities, beginning on Saturday evening March 15, with our Annual Purim Spiel, Megillah Reading, Pizza Dinner, Carnival games, and Hamentaschen. The evening begins at 5:30pm with dinner and games, followed by the reading of the Megillah and our annual Purim Spiel "The Megillah According to the Beatles." We end the evening with Hamentaschen and refreshments. Then, on Sunday March 16, CBT Religious School's 7th Grade class is sponsoring its annual Mitzvah Day program for the school families and the congregation in lieu of regular classes. There will be many hands-on projects available to participate in, both onsite and off, including:

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Tuesday, March 11 – Jewish Film Festival at Century 16 Pleasant Hill

Meet for dinner before the movie. Get your ticket for the movie and join us for dinner first. Corner Bakery at 6:00.

7:30 pm The Dandelions (du Vent dans mes mollets)

France, 2012, 90 minutes, French/subtitles

Friday, March 21 6:30 pm – Sisterhood Shabbat

Please join us for our annual Shabbat service - let me know if you'd like to participate. Ron Brown, Executive Director of Save Mt. Diablo, will be updating us on the current condition of "our mountain." Ron, a CBT Member, spoke for the Men of CBT service also. He is extremely interesting to listen to – plus he told us when the 4th Bore would open (and he was RIGHT)

Thursday, April 24 6:30 pm – Book Sisters at Sunrise Bistro

"The Buddha in the Attic" and "When the Emperor was Devine" by Julie Otsuka.

RSVP: Raynaravitz@gmail.com by April 23.

Sunday, May 4 2 pm – "The Real Housewives of Walnut Creek"

This new musical will be playing for just a short time at the Leshner Center. We have a block of tickets for this performance. If you are interested in getting a ticket for \$30, please let me know as soon as possible. Send a check to Temple made out to CBT noted for 5/4 play to be sure you will have a ticket. Raynaravitz@gmail.com We still have a few spots available.



5th grade teacher, Bob Canter, led a class on Day of Learning called "Hebrew Demystified."

****Winter Nights:** Thank you to Madeleine Bronstone who did an amazing job coordinating the Winter Night program this year and to all congregants who provided and served meals, did overnight shifts, and helped in many ways!

Immigration Justice

****Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA):** DACA is a program, established by executive order of the President, allows undocumented youth who were brought to the U.S. while children, to apply for temporary legal status. This allows young people to work legally and participate more fully in life in the United States. CBT has been participating in a program to provide assistance to young people applying for DACA status. The DACA program is now up and running with a total of 16 applicants who are currently in the process of applying for DACA status. We are raising money along with other congregations involved in this effort (through MICA - Contra Costa Multifaith Immigration Coalition in Action) to help applicants with their application process including paying for the costs of legal review, which is most typically needed. ***If you would like to contribute, the current CBT Tzedakah box recipient is the DACA program. There is also an envelope in the CBT office for donations if you prefer to write a check. Please make the check out to CLUE-CA and indicate on the check that it is for the DACA Sponsorship Program. CLUE (Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice) organizes the Interfaith community around immigrant justice being carried out primarily in Northern California.*** There are many different kinds of barriers to applying for DACA status, one of which is the fees associated with applying. So far, CBT congregants, along with other members from MICA, have met with two DACA applicants to better understand their needs and determine how to help. A common thread in both of these applicants' lives was realizing during high school the obstacles they would face in making a life for themselves in the in the U.S. without citizenship. Finishing high school without citizenship would lead to a dead end without the possibility of getting a job, or continuing education. With the possibility of attaining DACA status, both of these applicants returned to high school to receive their GED (a DACA requirement) and both hope to be pursuing jobs in the medical field – one as an EMT, and one in administrative services. CBT members involved in the DACA program are also trying to find appropriate professional and training program contacts for applicants. To say that receiving DACA status can be life changing for these applicants is an understatement. ***If you would like to receive emails about this program as we move forward, please email me (tguterman@aol.com) or Michael Fischer (mjf1155@gmail.com) to be added to the list.***

****Michael Chavez Center:** Also, The Michael Chavez Center, which is where one of the applicants mentioned above found out about being DACA eligible, is currently serving 29

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The Men of CBT will have a new and exciting calendar coming out this month announcing upcoming events for 2014. Our congregation will be very busy with events that will recognize Rabbi Asher's retirement and the Men of CBT will contribute as much time and energy as possible to ensure a memorable embarkation. Seeing more of us at Friday night and Saturday services would be a Mitzvah.

Like when a family pulls together to help a loved one in need, our families can help pull together as a congregation to help as much as we can. For example, our Capital Campaign, This is a very important campaign to raise funds for our Temple's future. We all want the very best for our shul and giving what we can is not only a wonderful feeling but helps a very worthy cause. If we can reflect on Harry Wittenberg's speech as he reflects on the need to donate to our Capital Campaign, "A little goes a long way."

"Shop Irene First!" I can't say enough about our Gift Shop. Ladies and Gentleman peek in the window as you stroll by. Irene has some great stuff. Let's keep the \$\$\$ within our 4 walls. Check our wonderful gift shop for all your holiday needs. And tell them "**Bob**" sent you.

Purim Sameah !!

Welcome to Adar, the happiest, most joyous month of the Hebrew calendar. The joy of Adar is primarily due to the presence of a very special holiday. That holiday is Purim and celebrates the salvation of the Jewish people from a plot by the wicked Haman when he hoped to completely destroy the Jewish people. When Haman wanted to know the time that would be the most vulnerable for Israel, he cast lots to choose the month and the day. In Hebrew, that lot is called a *pur*, from which we get the name Purim. The lot fell upon the month of Adar. But when Haman's plot failed, Adar was transformed for the Jews from a month of grief to one of great rejoicing.

Note: Once every two or three years Adar doubles in size. This is due to the structure of the Jewish calendar. Since the Jewish year is comprised of 12 lunar months, it averages only 354 days. To bring it in sync with the 365 day solar year, a leap year is scheduled. The added month is Adar II and it is during this second month of Adar that this year we will be celebrating Purim.

Rabbi Asher's Retirement

Thirty - two years of spiritual guidance, teaching, friendship, dedication and service. To honor our beloved Rabbi, Raphael W. Asher, as he retires, we are planning a series of activities. Mark your calendar as appropriate. Watch for your invitation this month.

- **Saturday, May 24th at 10am**
A special 'homecoming' event just for Rabbi Asher's B'nai Mitzvah through 2008. He would love to hear from and see Congregation B'nai Tikvah 'graduates' from the past.
- **Sunday, May 25th at 2pm**
A celebratory afternoon of fun for all ages with music, food, Israeli dancing, face painting, tributes and more at the historical waterfront Craneway Pavilion in Richmond.
- **Saturday, June 7th at 7pm**
A more intimate evening affair with entertainment and toasts. This event will be in lieu of our annual gala.
- **Tribute Book**
A way for congregants, local community members, organizations and businesses to tell Rabbi Asher just what his presence at Congregation B'nai Tikvah has meant to them – and a loving gift for him to cherish.

As always, it takes a village.

Please watch your email for ways you can volunteer or contact Judy Blum, Temple Administrator.

Contributions

GENERAL FUND

In memory of David Solomon
Michael Solomon

In memory of Frank Berman
Susan and Bruce Berman

In memory of Malcolm Vineberg, III

In memory of Janette Vine
Joni and Mal Vineberg

In memory of Lillian Kalish Weiner
Susan Light and Rob Weiner

In honor of my family, Lisa Noble & Jeff Arnold,
Adam and Keith Arnold
Mr. Lawrence Noble

In memory of William Zaltikov
Kimberly and Brian Zagon

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

In loving memory of Anne Lapporte
Sy Lapporte and Family

In memory of Rudolph Vynanek
Joni and Mal Vineberg

In memory of Michael Hill McFarlane
Patricia Viera

GENERAL FUND FOR CANTOR'S MUSICAL PROGRAMS

In memory of Mildred Volov
Ruth and Larry Goldenberg

In honor of Kathy Berger's Conversion
Cookie Svingos

In memory of Adlin Peter Viera
Patricia Viera

CANTOR STEPHEN RICHARDS MUSICAL ENRICHMENT/CHOIR FUND

In memory of Sidney Volov
Ruth and Larry Goldenberg

In memory of Alice Chakoff

In memory of Ed Chakoff
Jackie Chakoff

In memory of Sidney Morse

In memory of Arthur Becker
Marjorie and Cantor Stephen Richards



Day of Learning

ABRAHAM NIVER SCHOLARSHIP FUND

In memory of Michael Leeds
Jennifer Leeds and Robert Hess

In memory of Isaac Bronstone

In memory of Nathan Bronstone
Madeline and Trace Bronstone

In memory of Sheila Friedberg
Karen Nicles and Stacey Epstein-Corbett

SOCIAL ACTION FUND

In memory of Arthur Unger
Alyce and Steve Rados and Family

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

In memory of Leon Saner
Jenifer and Ben Paul

In memory of David Ziegler
Suzy Ziegler

In memory of Ann Dienst
Gloria Kemna

In memory of Jean Kindall
Katherine and Marc Berger

RABBI SEARCH FUND

In honor of Jen Paul and Phil Weismehl
Chanel Benhamou

TREE OF LIFE - A Leaf has been added

In Loving Memory
Dorothy Simmons
Lynette and Michael Simmons

Shalom Connection

Condolences to

Jane Blumberg Long and family on the loss of her father,
Bernard Blumberg

Sandy Gross and family on the loss of his mother,
Mary Gross

Leeah Segev and family on the loss of her mother in law,
Carlotta Ramirez

Steve Unger and family on the loss of his father,
Arthur Unger

Kathy Weiner and family on the loss of her father,
Harry Dvorsky

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- ✧ The making and delivering of 125 Mishloach Manot baskets to the residents of the Reutlinger Community for Jewish Living.
- ✧ Baking Hamentaschen for the Reutlinger baskets.
- ✧ Making blankets and then delivering them to Shelter Inc in Martinez
- ✧ Clearing brush and cacti at Walnut Creek Open Space.
- ✧ Preparing snack bags for the Trinity Center.

More info will follow soon about which projects you can sign up for and how many slots are available. Hopefully you will all join us on this joyous weekend, ready to “eat, drink, and be merry”, and to dress up as your favorite Purim character. Chag Purim Samech!!



Pictures from last year's Mitzvah Day.



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Jews who remained observant during exile, would enter into a beauty contest to marry the gentile king. Modesty aside, a girl from a traditional family would never put her Shabbat or kashrut observance at risk in order to marry the king. Nor would her family even consider allowing her to marry a Persian man.

This one piece of information about Esther and Mordecai completely changes our understanding of the Purim story. Our heroes were not observant Jews who were so committed to their faith that they put their lives at risk in order to save their people. Our heroes were assimilated, non-practicing Jews, who discovered the depth of their pride in their heritage only when it was threatened. They probably assumed that Haman would only attack religious Jews, not the Jews who were more Persian than Jewish. They must have been quite shocked to discover that all Jewish families were in danger.

One of the many lessons of Purim is that you don't have to be a religious Jew, or even Jewish at all, to make a difference in the survival of the Jewish community. Interfaith couples who choose to raise their children as Jews, Jews and non-Jews who devote their time, money or talent to helping the Jewish community, children, adults...all of us can make a difference. In the Purim story we celebrate Esther and Mordecai's bravery. This year, let's celebrate our own bravery by committing, each of us, to the future of this Jewish community.

Our Purim celebration will begin at 5:30 on Saturday evening, March 15th. If you would like to participate in the shpiel (we need you!) please email me: [cantorchabon@tikvah.org](mailto:cantorhabon@tikvah.org). Rehearsals will be on Monday, March 3rd, Thursday March 6th and Monday March 10th, all from 7 - 9 pm. Religious School students can come to a rehearsal Sunday, March 2nd during school. No previous choir experience necessary! It promises to be a very fun way to participate in the holiday with your synagogue community.

Need a little help sending your child to Jewish camp this summer?

Contact the Temple Office to request an application for the

JAMES COHEN MEMORIAL CAMP FUND.

Completed applications due
March 15, 2014.



CBT is proud
to co-sponsor two outstanding films

The 19th Annual East Bay International Jewish Film Festival

American Jerusalem: Jews & the Making of San Francisco

Monday, March 10, 5:45 pm, Century 16 Theatres,
Pleasant Hill

The history of San Francisco comes alive in this fascinating documentary that begins in 1848 and the city's transformation from a remote seaside village to a bustling town. During the Gold Rush and continuing after the 1906 Earthquake, Jewish immigrants successfully integrated into the city, becoming civic influentials, prominent merchants and political leaders. The Jewish community thrived because San Francisco was a unique place - diverse, accepting, and open to innovation.

The Dandelions (Du Vent dans Mes Mollets)

Tuesday, March 11, 7:30 pm, Century 16 Theatres, PH

Isabella Rossellini co-stars in this sweet "dramedy" about sassy, nine year-old Rachel Gladstein and her adoring but overprotective parents. Set in 1989's provincial France, Rachel's Tunisian-Jewish mother bestows love through her tasty meatballs, while her handy-man father spends more time with Rachel's best friend's single mother than with his own family. Amidst the ups and downs of family life, Rachel seeks a friendship with her eccentric child psychologist (Rossellini).

For a complete schedule of the East Bay International Jewish Film Festival and to order tickets: eastbayjewish-film.org or call the Jewish Federation of the East Bay at 510.318.6484.



The Jewish Federation
The Jewish Community Foundation
OF THE EAST BAY

eastbayjewishfilm.org

jfed.org

Social Action

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Latino high school students throughout the Mt. Diablo Unified School District by providing a variety of services to help high school students and their families access and succeed in current and future educational paths. The Center provides: Tutoring and mentoring program on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:00-6:00; Field Trips for students (they recently went to UC Santa Cruz) and research projects, Student-Parent workshops where adults from different careers and jobs come to the Center to talk about their work, and how they pursued different kinds of educational and technical/job training experiences; and Outreach. The Center considers itself a "healing zone." They provide very important services to this community, run on little money and have many needs, including: More tutors and mentors; Healthy Snacks (staff often buy snacks with their own money, and they receive some food donations, but it's not always consistent); Computers (they currently have three computers, and need more), and Transportation (sometimes this is an obstacle in terms of getting to the Center which is on Monument Blvd. in Concord. We will be putting together a Signupgenius list to help with these needs. If you would like to receive the signup, please email me (tguterman@aol.com).



Art project on Day of Learning.

Have YOU visited the Tzedaka box
in our Lobby?



All donations made by March 31
will benefit

DACA: Sponsor a Dream
Program

Tzedaka recipient selected by our
Social Action Committee.

MARCH 2014 Adar I - Adar II 5774

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
						Parashat Pekudei Shabbat Shekalim 9:00am Lay Led Torah Study 10:00am Morning Minyan
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9:30am Religious School 10:00am Exploring Purim 10:00am Purimshpiel rehearsal 12:15pm - 1:15pm Machaneh Ivrit - Session III	12:30pm - 1:30pm Yoga! 7:30pm Ritual Committee Meeting	10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah 4:00pm - 5:45pm Religious School 7:30pm Sisterhood to Film Festival	7:00pm - 9:00pm Mah Jongg	7:00pm Jewish Life on American Soil 7:00pm - 9:00pm Purimshpiel rehearsal	Jewish Film Festival 6:30pm Family Shabbat Service	Parashat Vayikra Jewish Film Festival 9:00am Lay Led Torah Study 10:00am Shabbat Service - Bat Mitzvah of Lauren Assael
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Jewish Film Festival 9:30am Religious School 12:15pm - 1:15pm Machaneh Ivrit - Session III	Jewish Film Festival 12:30pm - 1:30pm Yoga! 5:30pm - 6:30pm Executive Board Meeting 5:45pm CBT sponsored film 7:00pm - 9:00pm Purimshpiel rehearsal	Jewish Film Festival 10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah 4:00pm - 5:45pm Religious School 7:30pm Sisterhood to film festival	Jewish Film Festival 1:00pm - 4:00pm Jewish Coalition for Literacy	Jewish Film Festival 7:00pm - 9:00pm Concert Rehearsals 7:00pm Jewish Life on American Soil	6:30pm Shabbat Service	Parashat Tzav 9:00am Lay Led Torah Study 10:00am Morning Minyan 5:30pm - 6:30pm Purim - pizza dinner & games 6:30pm - 7:30pm "The Megillah According to the Beatles"
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Purim 9:30am Religious School - MITZVAH DAY! 7:00pm - 9:00pm Mah Jongg	Shushan Purim 12:30pm - 1:30pm Yoga!	10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah 4:00pm - 5:45pm Religious School	6:30pm - 8:00pm RS Education Committee	7:00pm - 9:00pm Concert Rehearsals 7:00pm Jewish Life on American Soil	Jewish Film Festival 7:30pm Shir Joy - Sisterhood Shabbat	Parashat Shmini Jewish Film Festival 9:00am Lay Led Torah Study 10:00am Shabbat Service - 3rd graders participating
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Jewish Film Festival 9:30am Religious School 4:00pm - 5:00pm Songs of Love and Justice	12:30pm - 1:30pm Yoga! 6:30pm General Board Meeting	10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah 4:00pm - 5:45pm Religious School		7:00pm Jewish Life on American Soil	6:30pm Shabbat Service	Parashat Tazria 9:00am Lay Led Torah Study 10:00am Morning Minyan
30	31					
9:30am Religious School 12:15pm - 1:15pm Machaneh Ivrit - Session III	12:30pm - 1:30pm Yoga! 7:30pm Ritual Committee Meeting					

APRIL 2014 Nisan 5774

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1		2	3	4
		10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah ----- 4:00pm - 5:45pm Religious School		7:00pm Jewish Life on American Soil	6:30pm Family Shabbat Service - 2nd graders participating	Parashat Metzora ----- 9:00am Lay Led Torah Study ----- 10:00am Morning Minyan
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
9:30am Religious School ----- 9:30am - 12:00pm Passover Display in the Gift Shop ----- 10:00am Cooking for the Seder with Alison Negrin ----- 12:15pm - 1:15pm Machaneh Ivrit - Session III	12:30pm - 1:30pm Yoga! ----- 5:30pm - 6:30pm Executive Board Meeting ----- 6:30pm General Board Meeting	10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah ----- 4:00pm - 5:45pm Religious School		7:00pm Jewish Life on American Soil	6:30pm Shabbat Service	Parashat Achrei Mot ----- Shabbat HaGadol ----- 9:00am Lay Led Torah Study ----- 10:00am Morning Minyan & Haggadah Helper
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
9:30am Religious School ----- 9:30am - 12:00pm Passover Display in the Gift Shop	1st Night Passover ----- 12:30pm - 1:30pm Yoga!	NO Religious School ----- (Office closed) ----- 2nd Night Passover ----- 10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah ----- 6:00pm Community Seder	3rd Night Passover	4th Night Passover	5th Night Passover ----- 7:30pm Shabbat Service	6th Night Passover ----- 9:00am Lay Led Torah Study ----- 10:00am Morning Minyan ----- 7:30pm Passover Yiskor Service & Havdallah
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
NO Religious School ----- 7th Night Passover	(Office Closed) ----- Last Day Passover ----- 12:30pm - 1:30pm Yoga!	NO Religious School ----- 10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah			6:30pm Shabbat Service	Parashat Kedoshim ----- 9:00am Lay Led Torah Study ----- 10:00am Morning Minyan
27	28	29	30			
Yom HaShoah ----- 9:30am Religious School ----- 4:30pm - 5:30pm Yom Hashoah Community Event @ Isaiah	12:30pm - 1:30pm Yoga!	10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah ----- 4:00pm - 5:45pm Religious School	6:30pm - 8:00pm RS Education Committee			



2nd grade teacher, Gabrielle Jones, taught a class on
 “What the heck is Havdalah?”

On February 22, 2014 Contra Costa Midrasha held its annual fundraiser event. This speech was delivered that night by Melania Winslow, a High School Senior who grew up at CBT. It does a beautiful job of sharing the scope of the 5-year Midrasha experience. Enjoy! For more about Midrasha, visit www.ccmidrasha.com.

Hi I'm Melania, and I'm a senior here at Contra Costa Midrasha. As a senior one of the many things I'm worried about for when I go to college is what I'm going to do without Midrasha. It has always been my break in the middle of the week. After a night at Midrasha I feel refreshed and ready for whatever else the rest of the week brings. It also gives me a safe space to just be myself and to talk about things on a deeper level than we do at school.

We learn a lot about ourselves Wednesday nights at Contra Costa Midrasha. That's one of the big differences between Midrasha and regular school, because everything we do in the senior class is meant to get us ready to go to college. We learn what it's going to be like in college and what Judaism says about all of these things, whether it is personal hygiene or our biggest fears or even budgeting. We were not given solutions we were given tools so that we could come up with the solution ourselves. Midrasha has made Judaism relevant in my everyday life, and now I can go into these new situations that I'm going to be faced with next year and feel prepared. Because if I have a problem I know I can look back at my time at Midrasha and ask, what would Judaism say about this?

Midrasha is not just Wednesday nights but also weekend retreats. Midrasha retreats are more than giant Jewish sleepovers. There are a lot of people who go to Midrasha who don't get to go on retreats. But they are missing out on part of what makes Midrasha so special. After a retreat you feel a part of a bigger Jewish community and you have a greater bond with those people who were on the retreat because although it was less than 48 hours you have shared an experience that you can't find anywhere else. One of the things they talk about most at Midrasha retreats is kavannah. Kavannah is intention. If you do something without intention, without really meaning it, it doesn't make a difference. At the retreats you don't have to know what the prayers mean or know all the melodies as long as you have Kavannah. Midrasha has transformed me, now I go into hard conversations with my friends, into writing papers, and into my synagogue with Kavannah, I'm not there because I have to be, I'm there because doing things with Kavannah is how I choose to be Jewish.

Through Midrasha I also visited Israel. We hiked in the Negev, we snorkeled in Eilat, we visited the Kotel three times, and stayed at several Kibbutzim. There was one Kibbutz in northern Israel, that we spent Shabbat at. And at the end of Shabbat, after Havdalah, we ordered pizza. A couple of us grabbed one of the pizzas and climbed on top of this bomb shelter. I remember struggling to get up there but when I was finally sitting on top of that bomb shelter, with cool cement beneath me and the beautiful stars above me and all around me was Israel, I thought "I'm never going to have this experience again. I am so lucky to be able to do all of this because no one else is ever going to get to have this same experience that I am." It was one of the moments of clarity – so present, everything is so sharp, you can hear everything – that's how I feel when I feel holy and Jewish – everything is really clear and you just feel, special.

It's important to have Midrasha as a Jewish teen, I want to FEEL Jewish, BE A PART of that community and learn more about being Jewish. This is what Midrasha has given me.

YOGA the Gentle Way at CBT

Stretch, strengthen, tone, and de-stress Mondays from 12:30-1:30pm.

Anyone can attend – all levels welcome!

Cost: Drop in rate is \$15 or purchase 5 classes for \$60. Half of your payment is donated to CBT.

Bring your own mat.

Questions? e-mail DrsPresnick@earthlink.net

Dr. Laura has been practicing Yoga since 1972 and teaching yoga since 2000. She combines her 35 years of Chiropractic bio-mechanical expertise with Yoga to create a safe place for your spine and joints to gain flexibility, strength and whole-body balance.

**You will feel relaxed, refreshed, and awesome!
(Friends of CBT welcome to attend!)**

President.....

(continued from page 3)

agent to spark the reaction. That catalyst is you - none of what we plan can be set in motion without the participation and contributions of our own members. If you ask yourself "How can I get more involved in our temple?," here is a simple exercise to do. Look at the March and April calendars on our website, pick one or two things you're really interested in, and put it on your personal calendar. And here's a tip for you busy parents and professionals: "There's An App For That!" OMG - we have an app for both the iPhone and Android platforms (meaning your phones and tablets). Go to the Apple App Store or Google Play store and search for "CBT." It may take a little scrolling, but you'll see an app with a Torah scroll and the label CBT. Install it and open it up. You'll see icons to access our member directory, our calendar, our Facebook page and Website. So now you have one less excuse that you didn't know something was happening at temple. Oy, we're getting so modern!

See you all at temple. Don't forget to come up and say hello - I want to meet as many of you as possible, especially at the many events we have coming up in the next couple of months.



Israeli Dancing on Day of Learning.



Jewish Coalition for Literacy

Join the **Jewish Coalition for Literacy** as a volunteer reading tutor and make a difference in a child's life.

Sign up for a free tutor training workshop at www.jclread.org.

There will be a training workshop at CBT on Wednesday, March 12, 1 - 4pm.

Please join us to reduce the illiteracy rate in our community by becoming a JCL reading tutor. The three hour training session conducted by the Jewish Coalition for Literacy (JCL) reminds you why you love reading and teaches you how to help others acquire reading fluency and comprehension skills. Reading tutors will work one-on-one with kindergarten through third graders a minimum of once per week. Many students read below grade level and need a friendly, patient volunteer to read with them. No experience necessary - just a willingness to help and complete the training.

Hours flexible

Location- near

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Every Child Needs a Book

The bin is in our lobby.

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<http://www.eastbaychildrensbookproject.org/>



1st grade teacher and Tutor Mor Peretz led a session on Day of Learning - "You're in the Army Now!"



YOU'RE INVITED TO OUR ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL PASSOVER SEDER
Led by Rabbi Asher

- WHERE:** Congregation B'nai Tikvah Social Hall
- MENU:** A complete Passover meal catered by Sunrise Catering
CHOICE of: brisket of beef, roasted chicken or vegetarian stuffed cabbage
 (Gluten free meal available - indicate on your reservation below.)
- WHEN:** Tuesday, April 15, 2014. Arrive at 5:45 p.m.
 Seder will begin promptly at 6:00 p.m.
- COST:** \$45 / Adults, \$24 / children 4-12 (members)
 \$55 / Adults, \$28 / children 4-12 (non-members)
- RSVP:** Reservations due Monday, April 7.

Please return the portion below with your check payable to Congregation B'nai Tikvah and mail to CBT, 25 Hillcroft Way, Walnut Creek, CA 94597.
 Members can also make reservations on line.

Ceremonial wine
will be served for the
Seder.
If you'd like to bring
a nice bottle
for dinner,
you are welcome
to do so.

Name(s):	Entrée choice:		
	Brisket	Chicken	Vegetarian
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Enclosed is my (our) check for: _____ adults member \$45 / guest \$55
 _____ children member \$24 / guest \$28

Reservations due Monday, April 7.



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B'nai Tikvah Gift Shop

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The Gift Shop is open on Sunday mornings during Religious School or by appointment. Please call Irene Korn at 925.673.9300.

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For membership information, please contact the Temple Office.

PURIM
is right around the corner and
we need YOU for
**“THE MEGILLAH ACCORDING TO
THE BEATLES!!”**
Saturday, March 15
5:30 pm - Pizza dinner and carnival games
6:30 pm - The reading of the Megillah and
song-fest Purimshpiel with
John, Paul, George and Haman!
All are invited to participate in the Purimshpiel
Come to rehearsals March 3, 6 and 10 7 - 9 pm.
Students will rehearse Sunday, March 2 10am
Dinner \$10 / adults \$5 / children 5 - 12
(Gluten free available - just let us know!)
Send your check to the Temple Office
or members can sign up on line.
RSVP no later than Wednesday, March 12.

SONGS OF LOVE AND JUSTICE
An afternoon of songs and stories with
Cantor Chabon, Cantor Linda Hirschhorn
and the B'nai Tikvah choir.
SUNDAY, MARCH 23
4 pm
\$15 per person
Cantor Linda Hirschhorn has been teaching choirs and
performing her stories and songs all over the country
for the last 25 years. She has been working with our
choir for a couple of months teaching songs that will
inspire and move you and make you want to sing
along. Cantor Hirschhorn will also be performing songs
from her newest CD "AMAZED" released to critical
acclaim in October 2013.
Members can sign up in advance through
the Members Only section of our website or by
sending a check to the Temple Office.
Walk ins welcome!