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# Tikvah Talk

Vol. 34 Iss. 6

Congregation B'nai Tikvah  
Walnut Creek, CA

May / June 2015

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*Shalom, B'nai Tikvah!*

By Rabbi Rebecca Gutterman



The Psalmist wrote: “Teach us to number our days, that we may acquire a heart of wisdom.” There could hardly be more appropriate words for the period of time we now find ourselves in, between the holidays of Pesach and Shavuot. (See my esteemed colleague and friend Cantor Chabon’s column for more on Shavuot!)

This season is known as the Counting of the Omer. In ancient days, our ancestors would offer their first barley sheaf at the Temple in Jerusalem on the second day of Passover as an expression of thanksgiving. From there, following the commandment in the Torah, they would count ahead to Shavuot, a celebration of the full harvest.

Today, while we are no longer primarily an agrarian people, we continue the practice of counting these days forward, from the evening of the second Seder to the night before Shavuot.

Like so many of our rituals, counting the Omer has acquired multiple meanings over time. Beyond its original agricultural significance, numbering these days has become a way for us to experience the link between physical freedom (marked by the Exodus from Egypt), and spiritual purpose — which began with the Revelation of the Torah at Sinai. Every year, as we tell the story of our redemption from slavery, we are reminded that the story does not end there. Freedom is just the beginning. Over time, our story becomes more complex, more heartbreaking, more interesting, and in the end more *ours* — holding at its center the obligation to remain true to the principles of Torah, and to live with a sense of God’s presence in our lives.

Counting the Omer also gives us reason to think about how we make our actions count in the world. What sparks us to carry out an

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*Reflections...*

By Cantor Jennie Chabon



On Sunday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, Jews across the world will celebrate Shavuot, one of the most beautiful and most neglected of our holidays. In contrast to Passover—a holiday that is loved and celebrated by even the least observant Jews—Shavuot is a holiday that many Jews haven’t even heard of, let alone celebrated. Yet it is the day on which we commemorate revelation, the receiving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. Most Jews certainly understand the centrality and importance of the Torah. So how did we, as a people, lose our connection to the day on which it was given to us?

The challenge we face each year on Shavuot is how to recommit ourselves to the covenant that our ancestors accepted for us. They made an enormous leap of faith when they received the Torah at Sinai, from idolatry and polytheism to the acceptance of one intangible God. Their bravery laid the foundation for the Judaism we practice today. Yet what are we doing to keep their courage and faith alive? Are we continuing to examine our relationship to the Torah for ways in which to renew our commitment to God, or have we become complacent in what it means to be the guardians of this holy book?

It is customary on Shavuot to stay up all night studying Torah as a symbol of our renewed acceptance of the covenant. In Jerusalem, people who study throughout the night make a pilgrimage to the western wall to pray the morning service immediately at daybreak. It is a spectacular site to see thousands of exhausted and exhilarated Jews marching together to greet the morning. After the morning service the entire congregation gathers for the reading of the Ten Commandments. It is truly a magnificent experience.

This year at B’nai Tikvah, we will draw upon that early morning magic and celebrate Shavuot at sunrise. It is incredibly powerful to

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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.

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

**Temple Office (925) 933-5397**  
**Office Hours: Mon-Fri 9:00 - 5:00**

**Fax (925) 933-6833**

**E-mail: [office@tikvah.org](mailto:office@tikvah.org)**  
**Website: <http://www.tikvah.org>**

#### CONGREGATIONAL OFFICERS

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

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Mary Ann Wittenberg	Samantha Youngman

#### Upcoming B'nai Mitzvah

Bat Mitzvah of Marley Unger  
 Daughter of Marcy and Steve Unger  
 Saturday, May 16

Bar Mitzvah of Alex Roswall  
 Son of Leslie Kowitz and Eric Roswall  
 Saturday, June 6

Bar Mitzvah of Jonah Roswall  
 Son of Leslie Kowitz and Eric Roswall  
 Saturday, June 6

Bar Mitzvah of Brendan Greenberg  
 Son of Wendy and Marc Greenberg  
 Saturday, June 13

Shabbat Services begin at 10 am.  
 The Congregation is invited to attend.  
*Mazel tov to all our B'nai Mitzvah  
 and their families!*

**Please join us for our Annual Meeting**  
**Sunday, May 17**  
**9:45 am**

Come hear from Rabbi Gutterman, Cantor Chabon,  
 Phil Hankin, President Harry Wittenberg and  
 Treasurer John Rubinfeld in our  
 lovely amphitheater setting.  
 Bagels and coffee will be served.

#### Tikvah Talk

*Tikvah Talk* is published 6 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 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. Please submit articles electronically, if possible, to Congregation B'nai Tikvah, at [office@tikvah.org](mailto: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



The perception of time is fickle. At times, it seems to fly quicker than a windy day. This is my last Tikvah Talk article as President of CBT and I can't believe that two years has gone by so quickly. First and foremost, I want to thank the congregation for providing me the privilege of serving our temple. Two years ago, Rabbi Asher formally announced his retirement, we celebrated his retirement, a search committee was formed to find a new rabbi, and we hired our wonderful Rabbi Gutterman. Today, our congregation is engaged, our clergy is energized, and our future looks bright.

And you laughed at all of my jokes - now that is a real privilege!

I often ask myself if I am leaving the congregation better off than when I took on this role. That is a difficult answer for me - its best answered by you, our temple members. Ok - I'll pontificate for just a moment - I truly believe it is better off. How?

- ◆ Working closely with Rabbi Asher towards his retirement - helping with our celebrations of his legacy and securing him as our Rabbi Emeritus.
- ◆ Our wonderful Rabbi Gutterman has successfully transitioned and is bringing us into the next phase of our temple.
- ◆ Cantor Chabon has been incredible through the transition building a strong partnership with Rabbi Gutterman. And the results are clear through the many liturgical and musical programs she has developed (both with children and our adult members.) And in the middle of all this, she produced another wonderful CD, *Roots & Branches*.
- ◆ We have lowered our mortgage through refinancing. This gave us a little more wiggle room with our payments.
- ◆ Contra Costa Midrasha moved to CBT, providing greater visibility for us in our community.
- ◆ Our High Holiday and Phone Campaign appeals have made a significant contribution to our general funds.
- ◆ Our religious school is vibrant. An acknowledgement of Phil Hankin and all of his tremendous contributions, direction, and energy to the school and our kids. We'll miss him next year as he moves on in his career.
- ◆ Our Board of Trustees is engaged with new people and energy focused on increasing membership and formally welcoming new members.

I would go on with the list, but at some point, you would start thinking I was making it up. We've had a very busy two years together and I feel great about where we are, where we're going, and privileged to have had your strong support. I have to

(continued on page 13)

## Turn It, Turn It

By Phil Hankin, Religious School Director



Together over the past five years, with the help of the **CBT teaching staff, Teen Madrichim staff, CBT Board of Trustees, CBT Education Committee, Rabbis Asher and Gutterman, Cantor Chabon, and hundreds of parents**, we were able to create a Religious School which operates on the fundamental principle that Jewish education is an experiential endeavor that requires that everyone be "all-in." I have worked to create an environment at CBT whereby Sunday mornings (and Tuesday afternoons) was a destination for both students and adults. One did not want to miss a day of school because they did not want to miss out on what was going to happen next. We sang, we danced, we laughed, we ate, and we learned – all together as one Jewish family in the amphitheater under the big oak tree.

When I look back at my time here at CBT, what I will remember most is the smiles that beam off the faces of the students as they drive out of the parking lot and yell and wave "bye" to me from the back seat of the family car. This tells me that something happened during their experience that registered positively and had a lasting impact. I hope to one day have some of these students track me down to tell me how their life was changed by something I did for them, or that they remember one of my crazy hats. Most of all, I hope that all of these students go on to live involved Jewish lives as teens and adults.

Thanks you to everyone at CBT for making my 5 years here one of pure joy, and for allowing me to test my theories of how school should look and feel. This is a gift that will last me the rest of my professional career. I end with the sweet words of Max Hess in a thank you note to me after his Bar Mitzvah in November. (see page 5)



K'Tan Tan Sunday fun!

We had several wonderful events in March - Sisterhood Shabbat and the Women's Seder to name two special ones. Thanks to all who participated, and special thanks to Ruth Goldenberg for coordinating the seder led by Cantor Chabon and attended by 40 women.

Thank you to Martha Jensen for the creative seder centerpieces.

There are pictures from the event on the Congregation B'nai Tikvah Facebook page.



Please go to our FB page and hit "like" to get updates from our new Social Media Editor (and Sisterhood member.)

### **Sunday, May 3 – Contemporary Jewish Museum**

Meet at WC Bart 10 am for a 10:16 am train or come directly to CJM at 11:15 am for Docent led tour. Pay at the door - Adults \$12 Seniors (65 and older) \$9. RSVPs by April 26<sup>th</sup> to Cathie Izen at [cathie.izen@gmail.com](mailto:cathie.izen@gmail.com). Lunch will follow at Wise Sons Deli at the Museum. We'll visit the following exhibits -

Poland and Palestine: Two Lands and Two Skies plus Letters to Afar. In addition, The Dorothy Saxe Invitational is on display.

### **Tuesday May 19 6:30 pm – Book Sisters at CBT**

"The Glass Castle" by Jennette Walls

Dinner calls for street food. What about Israeli street food - Falafel? RSVP by May 15 to [raynaravitz@gmail.com](mailto:raynaravitz@gmail.com)

### **Sunday, June 7 8 pm – Cantor Chabon Concert**

Freight & Salvage in Berkeley

Admission \$18 or \$20 at the door - bring your friends - proceeds will go toward music programs at CBT

### **Tuesday June 16 6:30 pm – Book Sisters at CBT**

"The Goldfinch" by Donna Tartt

### **Tuesday June 23 6:00 pm – Mat Pilates Class by Ivy Noceto**

Join us for a special event with Men of CBT. Pilates teacher and congregant, Ivy Noceto (Ivy teaches Pilates at Yoga Works and Club Sport) will teach a class in our Social Hall. Everyone is invited. \$18 donation. Don't forget your mat!

## Shalom, B'nai Tikvah.....

(continued from page 1)

idea or good intention from a first seed sown all the way through to the harvest? In the midst of difficult times, how do we keep faith that there will be new revelations ahead? The simple act of counting these days— in acknowledgment both of where we are and where we hope to find ourselves, is in itself an act of strength and hope. Marking off this period of time, naming each day, helps us find our own expression of faith in tomorrow. This is how we make our days count. We count them!

Join us for two opportunities -- a Shabbat walk Saturday May 9 and a sunrise hike Sunday May 24 (details are on page 5) – to bring these reflections and points of contemplation outside the walls of our synagogue. Let's use our days to connect to each other and to Judaism in ways that are compelling and joyful.

And inspired by Psalm 90, may our numbering of these days bring us new sources of wisdom and insight as we move forward.

### Tu B'Shevat Walk in the Spring

On Saturday May 9, join us for a community walk around the Lafayette Reservoir (postponed from its originally scheduled date in February; one of the few it rained!)

We'll gather at the Recreation Area at 4:00pm.

(Park at one of the numbered spaces as you enter the park, and as you're facing the Reservoir, go to the left through the parking area toward the playground/group picnic area to meet.)

We'll plan to leave at 4:15 and return about an hour later, pausing along the way for some informal conversation taking off from a Jewish text or two.

We'll then end with an early dinner at Kebab Burger in downtown Lafayette! (<http://kabab-burger.com/>)

All are welcome to join us!

Please RSVP to Idelle Lipman at [idelle.lipman@gmail.com](mailto:idelle.lipman@gmail.com) so we know how many to expect for the walk, dinner or both.

(continued from page 3)

Dear Phil,  
 Thanks for teaching me Judaism!  
 When I moved to California I was quite disappointed at first with the Temple. On our first Shabat service I was overwhelmed by the formal-looking pews and grand, elegant sanctuary, as I compared it with our downscale, family-like Massachusetts synagogue with about 10 congregants at a Friday night service, sitting in a circle of folding chairs around a guitar-playing cantor. I thought, by comparison, that I was sitting in a church! But as I grew accustomed to the beautiful setting, I realized the amazing sense of community that made it so fun when I got to know it. But the true greatness of CBT is its educational and family programs, religious school, and prayer services, which all helped me (student) unlock the fundamental prayers required as a Bar Mitzvah, all made possible by educational directors like you. Thank you.

(continued from page 1)

come together in community when the world around you is still asleep. How much more so in honor of the Torah! We will meet at Briones Lafayette Ridge staging area on Pleasant Hill Road at 6:00 am on May 24<sup>th</sup>. We'll hike up to the gorgeous view and study some Torah together as we watch the world come alive. It promises to be a very beautiful way of celebrating Shavuot. We'll send out reminders as the date approaches, but please wear layers and good walking shoes, and bring yourself something warm to drink while we study. We are so excited to celebrate in this way together!

In anticipation of that morning, I encourage you all to set a *kavanah*, an intention, for the holiday. Perhaps it is difficult to connect to the idea of the Torah being revealed. Consider, instead, what you want to see revealed within *yourself* during the holiday and in the coming months. I believe that all of our holidays give us the opportunity to look inward at where we've been and where we're going. When we get to the top of our hike, as we sing in the morning together, we'll draw upon your intentions and usher in Shavuot with hopes for healing and transformation. See you all there!

### Team Tikvah – Team of Hope!

For the 15<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, Congregation B'nai Tikvah will be participating in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life.

Benefiting cancer research, prevention and patient support programs, Relay for Life is an organized, overnight community fundraising walk in which members of each team take turns walking around a school track. Because it's a team event, individual participants are not required to be at the track the whole time. But with round-the-clock food, games, activities and entertainment, some folks find it hard to leave!

This year, as we have for the past eight years, Team Tikvah – Team of Hope will be participating in the Martinez Relay for Life, being held this year on July 25-26. We're not the largest of the 25 or so teams out there, but we always have a big impact. Last year, the Martinez Relay raised more than \$75,000, with Team Tikvah accounting for more than \$9,500 of that total.

About 20 B'nai Tikvah members came out to walk in last year's Relay and we hope to see even more at this year's event. For more information about joining or supporting Team Tikvah – Team of Hope, contact Mike Cohn at [veefrog@gmail.com](mailto:veefrog@gmail.com) or Tina Guterman at [tguterman@aol.com](mailto:tguterman@aol.com).

**Cancer has no doubt touched the life of a loved one. Support this important event!!!**



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## Contributions

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### **GENERAL FUND**

In memory of Ted Deutsch

*Devra Aarons and Jon Hesser*

*Barbara and Bill Almy*

*Lance and Robert Canter*

*Marcie and Harvey Hochhauser*

*Ann and Stuart Lutzker*

*Jenifer and Benjamin Paul*

*Nancy and Arthur Solomon*

*Bonnie and Mark Tornheim*

In honor of Rachel Blum's wedding

*Chanel and Tracy Benhamou*

*Lance and Robert Canter*

*Jenifer and Benjamin Paul*

*Nancy and Arthur Solomon*

*Lisa and Howard Wenger*

In honor of Debbie and Marc Usatin's granddaughter

*Nancy and Arthur Solomon*

In memory of Donald Roy

*Andrea and Harold Wolf*

In memory of Shirley Maslin

*Marcia and Harvey Maslin*

In memory of Lucille Winslow

*Beverly and Phillip Winslow*

In memory of Stella Malkova

*Rakhil and Naum Sadetskiy*

In memory of Mimi McCullough Tullis

*Christine and Murray Sheldon*

In memory of Julia Scharlach

In memory of Max Sherman

*Lynette and Alan Scharlach*

In memory of Abraham Kurzrock

*Carol and Matthias Kurzrock*

In memory of Renee Denwitt

*Nancy and Arthur Solomon*

In memory of Ida Staffieri

*Mary Ann and Harry Wittenberg*

In memory of Dora Potuto

*Julie and Joseph Patute*

In memory of Harry Rattner

In memory of Ben Medvin

*Deborah and Alvin Medvin*

In memory of Edith Goldensohn

*Julie Babka-Kurzrock and Serge Babka*

In honor of Paul Kadden's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday

*Robin and Larry Gordon*

*Harry Kiefer*

In memory of Charles Wechsler

*Chelsea and Glenn Wechsler*

In memory of Zodick Malkov

In memory of Ada Yetskaya

In memory of Velly Malkov

In memory of Mehail Malkov

*Rakhil and Naum Sadetskiy*

In memory of Beatrice Bussey

*Debra and Stuart Bussey*

In memory of Milton Zagon

*Kimberly and Brian Zagon*

In memory of Craig Berkus

*Alvin Trepper*

In memory of Carol Gunter

*Bert Gunter*

With gratitude to Cookie and Rayna for a beautiful baby shower

*Amy Lichtenstein*

In memory of Edgar Kornhauser

*The Friedman family*

In honor of Miriam and Stan Newman's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

*Robin and Larry Gordon*

### **RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND**

In memory of Ted Deutsch

*Diane and Victor Leventhal*

In appreciation for your help with Saul's Bar Mitzvah

*Madeleine and Trace Bronstone*

In gratitude for hanging my Mezuzah

*Zaffy Welch*

In honor of Paul Kadden's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday

*Anna and Walter Gewing*

In memory of Carol Gunter

*Bert Gunter*

### **CANTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND**

In honor of Rachel and Darian Singer's wedding

*Judy and Walt Blum*

In memory of Milton Leon

*Sandra Leon*

In honor of the birth of his granddaughter

*Howard Bloomberg*

Wishing Larry Gordon a speedy recovery

*Anna and Walter Gewing*

With thanks to Jennie for teaching us trope & chanting

*Alison Negrin and Kevin Barnett*

In memory of Gussie Tama

*Sharon and Hugh Tama*

### **RABBI ASHER'S EMERITUS FUND**

In honor of Rachel and Darian Singer's wedding

*Judy and Walt Blum*

In appreciation for officiating at the baby naming ceremony of

Pearla Kay Anesoir

*Melanie and John Sandler*

### **ROSE & SAM USATIN MEMORIAL FUND**

In honor of David Gewing's 17<sup>th</sup> Birthday

*Anna and Walter Gewing*

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## FOR THE YOUNG ONES IN OUR COMMUNITY AND THEIR PARENT(S)

Fun with TIKVAH TOTS continues in the spring and early summer!

Families with little ones are invited to join our monthly

Friday morning playgroups on May 8 and June 12, from 10:00-11:00am.

The first 45 minutes are devoted to free play for the kids and chat time for adults.

To close out the hour, Rabbi Gutterman leads the group in Shabbat songs, with a story, the blessings and an informal Kiddush of juice and challah. Formal rsvp's are not required, though if you know you'll be attending and can let Judy Blum in our office know ([judyblum@tikvah.org](mailto:judyblum@tikvah.org)) that's always helpful.

Fridays with Tikvah Tots is ideal for children 3 years old and younger, and the grown-ups who love them!

New and returning attendees are welcome; we look forward to seeing you.

## TOT SHABBATS and FAMILY SHABBAT SERVICES

Mark your monthly calendar for the 1<sup>st</sup> Fridays of the month!

MAY 1<sup>st</sup> and JUNE 5<sup>th</sup>

Tot Shabbat at 5:30 pm, Pizza dinner at 6 pm, Family Shabbat service at 6:30 pm.

Dinner reservations due the Wednesday before, April 29 and June 3.

\$10 adults, \$5 children 5 - 12.

Reservations can be made on line or by sending a check to the Temple Office.

May's Family Shabbat service will include participation by our 2<sup>nd</sup> graders.

June's will include our K/1 class.

Prospective members are invited to be our guests for the June 5<sup>th</sup> dinner.

## K'TAN TAN - SUNDAY FUN!!

Bring your preschooler to the library Sunday, May 3 at 10 am  
for music time, special art projects and lots of fun and playing!

Appropriate for children under 5!

RSVPs appreciated to [holly.grossman@gmail.com](mailto:holly.grossman@gmail.com).

### *Welcome to our newest members...*

Yael and Yaniv Benaroya  
Arielle 8/7/09 and Maya 8/3/11

Judy Gordon

Alicia and James Kalamas  
Sophia 7/15/05, Niko and Timothy 12/19/07

Elizabeth Traugott and Michael Moreau

Samantha Youngman

Thank you to the Gift Shop for  
paying down our mortgage by  
\$10,000.

Shopping at our Gift Shop  
benefits your synagogue!

We'll be BBQing and serving lunch on the last day of Religious School, Sunday, May 17. Let me know if you want to roll up your sleeves and help!

Our next Men's night out will be Wednesday, May 20<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at Pyramid. Be sure to join us for some quality time with your CBT friends.

RSVP to [men.of.cbt@gmail.com](mailto:men.of.cbt@gmail.com).

### Shalom Connection

#### Condolences to:

Joe Schottland and family on the loss of his mother,  
Ruth Schottland

#### Mazel Tov to:

Judy and Walt Blum on the marriage of Rachel and Darian Singer  
Janet and Leo Brandess on the birth of grandson, Jackson Rich

The youngest  
one at  
The Pizza & Ice  
Cream Social  
after Religious  
School recently.



### ON-GOING PROGRAMS AT CBT

Open Bridge Wednesday mornings at 10 am.

YOGA -The Gentle Way

Mondays from 12:30 - 1:30 pm

Thursdays 6 - 7 pm

Contact Dr. Laura Presnick [drspresnick@earthlink.net](mailto:drspresnick@earthlink.net).

JEWISH MEDITATION - A TASTE OF TORAH

Tuesday mornings from 10 - 11 am

Each session begins focusing on the week's Torah portion.

2 AL-ANON GROUPS MEET AT CBT

Tuesdays from 12 - 1 pm, Fridays 10:30 - 11:30 am

Contact Al-Anon for more information.

**\*\*Blood Drive** will be held at CBT through Blood Centers of the Pacific (BCP), on **Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> from 9:00 to 1:00** in our Social Hall.

\*BCP uses an online appointment system, so **all you have to do to register is:**

**1. Go to BloodHeros.com, click on the donate blood link, and enter sponsor code CBT to register with your name and find an appointment time that suits you**

**2. Always good to make sure that you are eligible**, which you can determine by going to: <http://www.bloodcenters.org/docs/eligibility.pdf> for eligibility information

**3. On the morning of the Drive (5/3/15), you can fill out your Health Questionnaire online**, ahead of your appointment, at [www.bloodcenters.org](http://www.bloodcenters.org). You can also fill it out when you arrive at CBT (just not as efficient for you)

***Here is some information about the benefits of giving blood:***

- Every one donation of blood saves three lives
- 20 percent of recipients are children
- Giving blood is 100 percent safe
- You can get your cholesterol screened if you want to
- You earn points every time you donate which can be used for movie tickets, DVD's and the like
- You can have a delicious nosh afterward
- You can relax in a comfortable chair, with fellow congregants, looking out at our picturesque view of Mt. Diablo

***\*\*The Multifaith Immigration Coalition for Action in CCC - Immigration Justice Forum Part I*** – On Sunday May 3<sup>rd</sup> from 3:00-5:00 at Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church there will be an Immigration Forum on the topic of Supporting Un-accompanied Children and Families Fleeing Violence. There will be various speakers including newly arrived families sharing personal stories, clergy, director of Centro Latino Cuscatlan, and staff from Monument Impact and from Rep. Mark DeSaulnier's office.

***\*\*Family Market/Let's Feed the Kids:*** ICCCC Food Security Task Force/Let's Feed the Kids has asked us to join with them in providing food/produce to the Shelter Inc. Pittsburg Shelter at 84 W. 6th Street where there are 8 families in transitional housing. The food would be provided at the end of the month when EBT/food stamps have run out for the families. We are ***looking for two volunteers at the end of each month (FOURTH WEDNESDAY FROM 1:30-4:00) to share a shift with Shell Ridge volunteers to set up the Family Market (food that will be purchased by Let's Feed the Kids) and help the residents as they fill their bags with their selection of what they would like/need. Sign up at:***  
<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0b4aaca82d6-lets>

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## Contributions.....

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### **GENERAL FUND FOR CANTOR'S MUSICAL PROGRAMS**

In memory of Ted Deutsch

*Cookie Svingos*

*Susan and John Rubenfeld*

In honor of Rachel Blum's wedding

*Susan and John Rubenfeld*

In support of Cantor Chabon's concert at Freight & Salvage

*Tina Guterman and Doug Polcin*

*Idelle Lipman*

*Rayna and Richard Ravitz*

*Paula Reinman and Sandy Gross*

*Lisa and Howard Wenger*

In memory of Leo Reif

*Carol Reif and Jeffrey Gilman*

### **JAMES COHEN MEMORIAL FUND**

In memory of Hermina Davidson

*Diane and Victor Leventhal*

In honor of Jared Goldin

*Norris Huddleston Family*

### **CANTOR STEPHEN RICHARDS MUSICAL ENRICHMENT/CHOIR FUND**

In memory of Alice Chakoff

In memory of Ed Chakoff

*Jackie Chakoff*

In memory of Ted Deutsch

In memory of Edna Richards

*Marjorie and Cantor Stephen Richards*

In memory of Virginia E. Becker

In memory of Paul Arnon Klein

*Susan and John Klein*

### **STEPHAN JASPAN RELIGIOUS SCHOOL FUND**

In memory of Dorothy Simmons

*Lynette and Michael Simmons*

In support of the movie Havana Curveball

*Jonathan, Tal and Matthew Winchell*

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION FUND**

In memory of Allan Green

*Lisa and John McLaurin*

### **ABRAHAM NIVER SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

In memory of Mary Spack

*Barbara Spack*

In memory of Boris Khalameyzer

*Galina and Sasha Khalameyzer*

### **MORDOCH/NADJARI HOLOCAUST EDUCATION FUND**

In memory of Ted Deutsch

*Susan and John Klein*

In memory of James Welch

*Zaffy and Denis Welch*

### **SOCIAL ACTION FUND**

In memory of Mary Kimball Sutherland

In memory of Robert Salusky

*Monica Salusky and John Sutherland*

### **PRAYERBOOK FUND**

In memory of Leah Gordon

In memory of Melva Blink

*Robin and Larry Gordon*

### **CAPITAL CAMPAIGN**

In memory of Ann Dienst

In memory of Robert Kemna

*Gloria Kemna*

In memory of Ted Kaplan

*Rayna and Richard Ravitz*

### **TREE OF LIFE – a leaf has been added**

In loving memory of Ted Deutsch

*Jackie Chakoff*

*Rayna and Richard Ravitz*

*Florence and David Specland*

*Bonnie and Mark Tornheim*

*Carol and Ira Wallis*

### **COUNTING THE OMER 'GRAIN' DRIVE**

The Torah commands that the first sheaf, or Omer, of the new harvest should be offered as a sacrifice of thanksgiving. From that day, a period of seven weeks is to be counted, until the festival of Shavuot, and celebrations of the first harvest. Immediately following this commandment, the Torah commands that when we reap the harvest we shall not reap to the edges of the field or gather the gleanings.

These are to be left for the poor and the stranger.

It is our custom at B'nai Tikvah to bring our offerings of "grain" (pasta, cereal and other grain products) during the Omer period and our "gleaners," the Contra Costa Food Bank, will provide these to needy families in our community.

We will have food barrels in the foyer through May 3<sup>rd</sup> to receive your donations.



Contra Costa Midrasha invites you to join us for our annual graduation event on May 20th, starting at 7:30pm at Congregation B'nai Tikvah in Walnut Creek. Why should you join us for this special night? CCM's annual Graduation is an amazing opportunity to hear directly from our seniors – most of whom have been in our program since 8th grade – about the impact of the Contra Costa Midrasha program on their lives. Many teens participate in graduation from high school, but most call the CCM graduation the more meaningful of the two experiences. It's a chance for them to reflect on the wisdom they gathered here, to thank their teacher/mentors, and for their mentors to share final thoughts and educational words of wisdom with them and us. For me, it's a short window of time to reflect on the changes I've seen them make and the impact they've made on Midrasha and the community here. Any and all members of our community are highly encouraged and welcome to join us. I invite you all to join us this year in particular to witness the beautiful bond that exists amongst this thoughtful and kind group of teens. I am confident their speeches will touch all of us. Of this year's graduating class of 18 teens, 5 of them hail from B'nai Tikvah – Sophie Babka, Melanie Barrall, Jared Brogdon, Dani Kiesler, and Jake Levy. Here is a brief preview of what's to come at graduation. They are some of my favorite excerpts from last year's graduates (class of 2014) from B'nai Tikvah:

✓ Arielle Restuch, a graduate from 2014 and the current Madrichim coordinator at B'nai Tikvah's Hebrew school shared this, *"I am so grateful that I joined because all of the experiences, the opportunities that I've had, and the community has been one of the best things to happen to me. Midrasha eventually became like a family to me, I looked forward to going every week, and couldn't wait to see my friends. Midrasha is one of most loving and safe communities that I know. Midrasha has helped me grow so much as a person. It has helped me to really get to know myself better. At first Midrasha was just something fun to do on a Wednesday night, hanging out with friends and being Jewish, but in reality it has really helped me to grow and to change as I chose and has provided me with a safe community to be myself in."*

✓ Aaron Barrall, also a member of last year's class had this to say about the Midrasha staff, *"I simply cannot speak more positively about the staff here at Midrasha. Right here is a concentrated group of the coolest, most caring, honest and compassionate individuals I have ever met. They make Midrasha what it is."*

✓ Melania Winslow, helped explain the new curriculum for seniors at Midrasha. *"We learn a lot about ourselves Wednesday nights at Contra Costa Midrasha. That's one of the big differences between Midrasha and regular school, beside the donuts and the really awesome teachers. This year has been especially relevant in my life 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?"*

This Spring we are also working on last efforts to recruit our teens to travel to Israel together with the NFTY in Israel program. Right now, 11 teens from Contra Costa Midrasha (7 from B'nai Tikvah!) will travel together to Israel this summer. This is one of the largest contingencies we've sent on the same trip in over a decade! Spots are still open for this summer's trip. The sign up deadline is May 2nd. For anyone who is interested, please visit <http://www.nftyisrael.org/westcoast/>.

Enrollment for the 2015/16 year at Contra Costa Midrasha is now open at <http://shop.ccmidrasha.com/>! (Enroll by June 15th and receive a FREE copy of Wendy Mogel's book, "The Blessing of a B-Minus: Using Jewish Teachings to Raise Resilient Teens.")

For more information about Contra Costa Midrasha's 2014-15 year or its upcoming 2015-16 year, visit our website at [www.ccmidrasha.com](http://www.ccmidrasha.com), or contact us at [office@ccmidrasha.com](mailto:office@ccmidrasha.com) or 925/944-4701.



# MAY 2015 Iyar - Sivan 5775

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 5:30pm - 6:00pm Tot Shabbat 6:00pm Pizza dinner 6:30pm Family Shabbat Service - 2nd graders participating	2 Parashat Achrei Mot- Kedoshim 9:00am Lay Led Torah Study 10:00am Morning Minyan
3 9:00am - 1:00pm Blood Center of the Pacific Blood Drive 9:00am - 12:00pm Shop CBT Gift Shop! 9:30am - 12:00pm Religious School 10:00am - 11:00am K'tan Tan 11:15am Sisterhood to CJM	4 12:30pm - 1:30pm Yoga! 7:30pm Ritual Committee Meeting	5 10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah 4:00pm - 5:45pm Religious School	6 10:00am Open Bridge 7:15pm Midrasha	7 Lag B'Omer 6:00pm - 7:00pm Yoga!	8 6:30pm Shabbat Service	9 Parashat Emor 9:00am Lay Led Torah Study 10:00am Morning Minyan 4:00pm - 5:00pm Tu B'shevat (weather delayed) hike
10 NO Religious School	11 12:30pm - 1:30pm Yoga! 6:00pm - 7:00pm Executive Board meeting	12 10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah 4:00pm - 5:45pm Religious School 7:00pm - 9:00pm Midrasha BODM	13 10:00am Open Bridge 7:15pm Midrasha	14	15 6:15pm - 7:15pm Dinner Cuban style! 7:30pm Shir Joy	16 Parashat Behar- Bechukotai 9:00am Lay Led Torah Study 10:00am Shabbat Service - Bat Mitzvah of Marley Unger
17 9:00am - 12:00pm Shop CBT Gift Shop! 9:30am - 12:00pm Religious School - Last Day 9:45am - 11:00am Annual Meeting	18	19 10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah	20 Midrasha - Graduation 10:00am Open Bridge 7:00pm Men's Night Out	21 6:00pm - 7:00pm Yoga!	22 6:30pm Shabbat Service	23 Erev Shavuot Parashat Bamidbar 9:00am Lay Led Torah Study
24 Shavuot 6:00am Shavuot Walk in Briones 5:00pm 7th Grade Graduation	25 Memorial Day Office Closed	26 10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah	27 10:00am Open Bridge	28 6:00pm - 7:00pm Yoga!	29 6:30pm Shabbat Service	30 Parashat Nasso 9:00am Lay Led Torah Study 10:00am Morning Minyan
31						

## Cuban Shabbat Dinner Friday, May 15

Our Membership Committee invites to join us for a Cuban themed dinner before our Shir Joy service  
Friday, May 15 at 6:15 pm.

If you missed our past potluck dinners, this one is extra easy - Havana restaurant  
(one of our Taste of Walnut Creek participants) is doing the cooking for us!

There will be children's menu items on a separate table, so if you are bringing children, please sign up for that meal or if  
your children are going to eat from the adults' table, please RSVP accordingly so we can stay within the budget.

Adults \$18, children \$9.

Please invite friends to join you—guests are always welcome. They'll love our Shir Joy service afterwards!  
RSVPs needed by noon Wednesday, May 13. Sign up on line through the Member's Only or watch for the signup genius.

# JUNE 2015 Sivan - Tamuz 5775

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
	12:30pm - 1:30pm Yoga! 7:30pm Ritual Committee Meeting	10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah	10:00am Open Bridge	6:00pm - 7:00pm Yoga!	5:30pm - 6:00pm Tot Shabbat 6:00pm Pizza dinner 6:30pm Family Shabbat Service - K/1 participating	Parashat Beha'alotcha 9:00am Lay Led Torah Study 10:00am Shabbat Service - B'nai Mitzvah of Alex & Jonah Roswall
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
8:00pm Cantor's concert!!! An evening of folk-infused music from near and far.	12:30pm - 1:30pm Yoga! 6:00pm - 7:00pm Executive Board meeting	10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah 7:00pm - 9:00pm Midrasha BODM	10:00am Open Bridge	6:00pm - 7:00pm Yoga!	10:00am - 11:00am Tikvah Tots 6:30pm Shabbat Service	Parashat Sh'lach 9:00am Lay Led Torah Study 10:00am Shabbat Service - Bar Mitzvah of Brendan Greenberg
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	12:30pm - 1:30pm Yoga!	10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah 6:30pm Book Sisters	10:00am Open Bridge	6:00pm - 7:00pm Yoga!	6:15pm - 7:15pm Shabbat Dinner 7:30pm Shir Joy	Parashat Korach 9:00am Lay Led Torah Study 10:00am Morning Minyan
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	12:30pm - 1:30pm Yoga! 6:30pm General Board meeting	10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah 6:00pm - 7:00pm Pilates	10:00am Open Bridge	6:00pm - 7:00pm Yoga!	6:30pm Shabbat Service	Parashat Chukat 9:00am Lay Led Torah Study 10:00am Morning Minyan
28	29	30				
	12:30pm - 1:30pm Yoga!	10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah				

## Join the Community for JEWISH HERITAGE NIGHT!

Oakland A's vs. Baltimore Orioles  
Tuesday, August 4 at 7:05 pm



Please secure your tickets now for the Oakland A's Jewish Heritage Night!  
In the past we have sold all of our tickets so don't wait and be disappointed.  
Tickets are \$36 and include parking (normally \$20), entertainment (priceless), a food item,  
and an Oakland A's give-away.  
Invite your baseball enthusiasts to join you as this is a CBT fundraiser.

To reserve your tickets send your check to the Temple Office.

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## President's Message.....

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*(continued from page 3)*

say one of the main pleasures I realized through my role as President is getting to know so many of you. You have all been so warm, supportive, and encouraging to me over this time. Even on the toughest days, when a member approaches me with a hug, a greeting of "Good Job," or a laugh at my jokes, it made it all worth it.

What is also so encouraging to me who is who our next President will be. Dan Lapporte has been a strong supporter of CBT for many years. He and his family have been members for a longtime and has been a strong contributor in many ways. Over these past two years, he has helped me significantly in most matters I've worked on. He has strong relationships, has a great vision for where CBT needs to grow, and is just a real mensch. I encourage all of you to introduce yourselves to him as you did to me and cheer him on.

I want to finish this article by thanking everyone who has supported me over the two years. First acknowledgement is to Judy Blum - she is the backbone of our temple and has been a remarkable supporter, and good friend. Thank you Judy for all you do for CBT.

Next is the Executive Board: Rabbi Gutterman, Cantor Chabon, Judy Blum, Dan Lapporte, John Rubinfeld, Glenn Gould, Bob Stern, Jared Goldin. Their dedication to our temple is truly heartfelt - they have been through many difficult decisions these past two years and I appreciate all they have done for me and for our temple. And of course, our Board of Trustees these last 2 years: Julia Babka-Kurzrock, Judith Barrall, Bob Canter, Alan Gould, Bob Grossman, Sandy Gross, Tina Guterma, Amy Lichtenstein, Idelle Lipman, Bruce Meyers, Rayna Ravitz, Leehat Segev, Bonnie Tornheim, Samantha Youngman, Todd Young, and Mary Ann Wittenberg. This dedicated group of people have weathered many decisions and have organized many events to help our congregation. They have been a strong supporter and I want to thank them all.

And finally, my wife Mary Ann. As Chair of the Ritual Committee, she has tirelessly innovated how we celebrate the holidays. She has also listened to my craziest ideas and incoherent kvetching - and has set me straight every time. Thank you for all of your love and patience.

Going forward, I will transition into the comfortable position of Past President serving on both Executive and General Boards. And I'll have a little more time to devote to the Tikvah Tones to bring you more music.

*Yasher Koach to our new President, our Board, Clergy and Staff. See you all at CBT!*

### *B'nai Tikvah Gift Shop*

Tallitot, Bags and Kippot  
Mezuzot Yads Kiddush Cups  
Candles and Candlesticks  
Challah Boards Tzedaka Boxes Jewelry  
Greeting Cards, Books  
Spice Boxes and Havdalah Sets  
SHOFARS and lots more!

The Gift Shop is open on Sundays when Religious School is in session or by appointment.

Please call Irene Korn at 925.673.9300.

Proceeds from the shop benefit  
Congregation B'nai Tikvah projects.

Shop YOUR synagogue first!

### **"Tikvah l'Atid – Hope for the Future"**

*"As our parents planted for us before we were  
born,  
so do we plant for those who will come after us."*

Congregation B'nai Tikvah has joined  
the Life & Legacy program in conjunction with the  
Jewish Community Foundation of the East Bay.

Please consider remembering CBT  
when you are preparing your estate plans.  
Contact Judy Blum for more information.



*Lisa*  
DUNCAN  
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Dick Schwartz & Art Korn opening the door for Elijah during the Seder.

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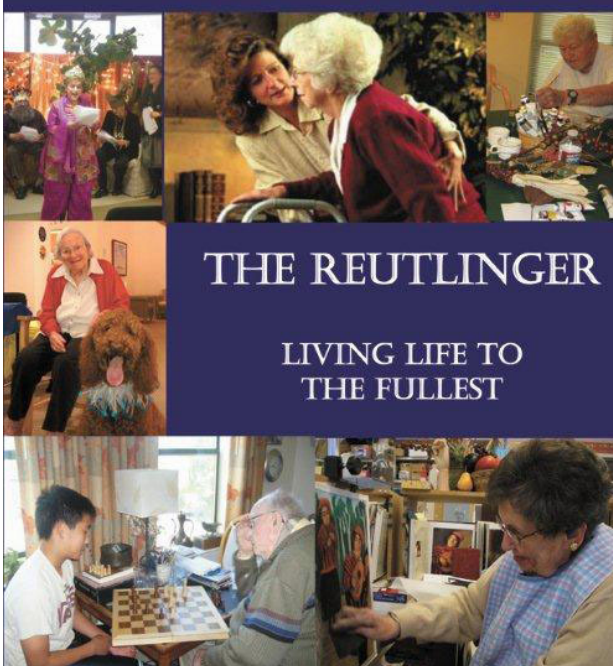
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**EAST BAY  
CHILDREN'S BOOK PROJECT**

Every Child Needs a Book

The bin is in our lobby.  
Bring in gently used books for  
all age children.

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



**GAN SHALOM CEMETERY**

The Board of Trustees of Congregation B'nai Tikvah  
has approved the establishment and the location  
of the B'nai Tikvah Garden at Gan Shalom Cemetery, 1100  
Bear Creek Road, Briones.

For those who have purchased plots and those  
considering a "pre-need" purchase,  
please contact Jay Lewis, Managing Funeral Director  
at Sinai Memorial Chapel,  
3415 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, at (925) 962-3636.



**Have YOU visited the Tzedaka box  
in our Lobby?**



All donations received through the end of  
June will be sent to Trinity House,  
a non-residential program  
serving the homeless and working poor  
adult men and women in the area.  
For more information visit  
<http://trinitycenterwc.org>.  
This organization was selected by Sisterhood.

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For membership information, please contact the Temple Office.



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