

CONGREGATION
B'NAI TIKVAH

TIKVAH TALK

November/December 2016

Walnut Creek, CA

Vol. 36 Iss. 2

SHALOM, B'NAI TIKVAH!

By Rabbi Rebecca Gutterman



Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav, an 18th century Chasidic leader, was known for teaching through stories and poetry. His writing often appears in our Shabbat services, whether to set a certain mood at the beginning or to thematically accompany a particular prayer. One of his most enigmatic yet telling proverbs was

this one: "As your answers have become my questions, so may my questions become your answers."

Clearly there are any number of ways to interpret this. One of them is that Rabbi Nachman may have been reflecting the very nature of Jewish learning and teaching in this brief saying. From the beginning, our tradition has been built upon questioning, debating and interpreting over and over. We may start with a particular premise, and from there we turn to what various commentators have said about that premise over time. Answers give way to more questions, and new questions to new answers. The beauty of this process is the extent to which it has been recorded and preserved. Even minority opinions or traditions that have fallen out of use have their place on the page. And all these years later, ours remains a heritage with room for multiple voices... including our own.

As a rabbi, one pattern I've noticed over the years when it comes to questions and answers is the extent to which adults in synagogue communities use phrases like, "this may be a stupid question, but..." or "I apologize if I'm the only one who doesn't know this..." Nothing could be further from the truth. Whatever one's question is, it is inevitable that another congregant has a similar one. How humanizing then, to realize that whoever you are, you are not the only one in the Sanctuary or the classroom with gaps in your knowledge, or who may be aware of a certain ritual but not the reasons behind engaging in it.

It is a vulnerable undertaking to return to Jewish learning as adults, especially after a hiatus of many years. When we approach a new area of knowledge, especially with myriad personal and professional accomplishments in other parts of our lives, we are apt to feel impatient with ourselves, or intimidated, or frustrated if our progress seems slow. It is so very common. But time and time again, the suspicion surfaces that everyone else knows the prayers, the melodies, the Hebrew better than we do.

We all share these feelings from time to time. Luckily, one of the wonders of Jewish learning and engagement is that it's nev-

continued on page 5

REFLECTIONS...

By Cantor Jennie Chabon



This month, I offer an adaptation of my Yom Kippur drasha. Though I wrote it with Yom Kippur in mind, I believe that it is also relevant as we begin to navigate the intensity of the winter months. May we all find grounding in our intentions for ourselves and for our community as we come to the end of 2016.

I have a question for us all to consider, and it's a real question: What are we all doing here today? What are YOU doing here today? Have you stopped to consider what you hope to get out of Yom Kippur this year? I asked the choir before Rosh Hashanah services to offer a word that they are hoping to give to the congregation this year. They offered so many beautiful words to help hold our sacred space together: connection, awe, hope, community. But how many of you came in with an intention, a *kavanah*, for yourself?

For me, my prayer every year, and really, every day, is to be allowed to be a vessel for God's light. To allow God's spirit to flow through me as I pray. To release my critical mind so that I can become *klei kodesh*, a holy vessel. For what higher high is there than union with the One you are longing for?

When I was in cantorial school, we had to show up for minyan every day at 7:30 am. In the summer heat and in the winter snow, we had to drag ourselves out of bed to *daven together as a cantorial community*. You can imagine that most of us weren't very enthusiastic about doing this every day. Most days I was happy that I had done it in the end, but it was rare for the experience to be transformative in any way. We were taking turns leading prayer as we became cantors.

One day we asked our dean why it had to be EVERY DAY. Couldn't we just meet a couple of times a week? To which he replied that God doesn't show up on command. When you are yearning for an answer, or yearning for connection, you may not get any kind of response from Above. But sometimes when you least expect it, *Hakadosh BaruchHu makes an appearance and man are you happy you were there to experience it*. He told us that we have to show up every day to pray so that we are there when God's spirit moves the room. You don't want to miss it.

Last week, Rosh Hashanah morning, was one of those days. I may have been the only person in the room to feel it, but *Hakadosh BaruchHu was here, no doubt about it*. Some people call it being in the zone, when your mind is released and you are just an open channel. Or an expression of bliss, of pure joy, of 100% connection and light. Or maybe it's the words of Joseph

continued on page 9

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.

CONTACT

Temple Office (925) 933-5397
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STAFF

Rebecca Gutterman, Rabbi
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 Amanda Radman, Temple Administrator
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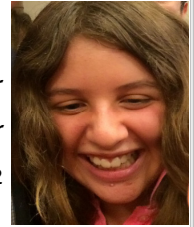
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UPCOMING B'NAI MITZVAH



Bar Mitzvah of Jeremiah Mintz
 Son of Beth and Jonathan Mintz
 Saturday, November 5



Bat Mitzvah of Rachel Hunter
 Daughter of Diane and Steve Hunter
 Saturday, November 12



Bar Mitzvah of Zachary Dietderich
 Son of Laurie Abbey Dietderich and
 Daniel Dietderich
 Saturday, December 3

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

CBT OFFICE HOURS

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 20-25

The CBT office will have limited hours the week of November 20.

Monday, November 21— 10:00— 1:00 pm

Tuesday, November 22— 10:00 1:00 pm

Wednesday, November 23— 10:00 1:00 pm

Thursday, November 24— Closed for Thanksgiving

Friday, November 25— Closed (We will be having services at 7: 30 pm)

Regular office hours resume November 28. Thank you!

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 10th of each month.

Please submit articles electronically to office@tikvah.org (subject Tikvah Talk).

Congregation B'nai Tikvah can be accessed on-line at: <http://www.tikvah.org>.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Dan Lapporte



B'nai Tikvah family –

Shanah Tovah. Thank you all for your participation and engagement during our High Holiday Services last month. I've had a lot of great feedback, and look forward to more of your feedback in the survey I sent on October 14.

We want to enter our Double Chai 36th year with all the ruach and energy it deserves.

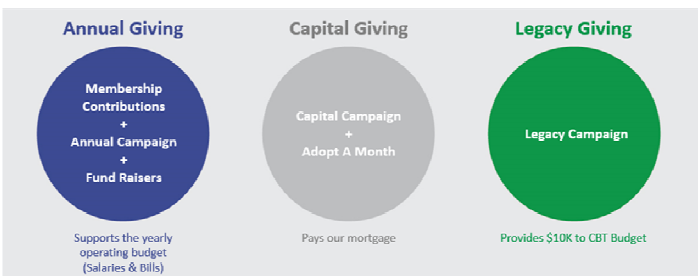
At the suggestion of one of our members, I thought I'd publish my Rosh Hashanah remarks here in case you missed them or want to read them more thoroughly. As always, please feel free to e-mail me at bnaitikvahpresident@gmail.com with questions.

Shana Tova. As I reflect on the past year at B'nai Tikvah and in our world, I can't help but think of some wonderful moments and some not so wonderful moments. We saw the first woman candidate from a major political party nominated for president and we saw the specter of violence against women across the world. We saw the triumph of the Olympics and the agony of war, but today I'd like to focus on the incredible opportunities ahead, and try something a little different too.

To start, let me say that these remarks will be brief and I'm not going to ask you for money. I'm saving that until You Kippur. Instead, what I'd like to share today is the significance of the secular year ahead: 2017. You see, B'nai Tikvah was formed in 1981 by a group of Jews looking for a Reform place to worship and build a community together. Next year, 2017, is our 36th year: our double Chai year.

In Hebrew, Chai means life, and as we think of the significance of our double Chai, let me point out the obvious: without all of you – some sitting here who founded our Synagogue in 1981 and some who have just recently joined us – our community wouldn't be what it is today. It's the energy of this community that keeps B'nai Tikvah moving. It is our culture and it's what sustains us.

That culture has formed through the years and will continue to evolve; however, as we enter our double Chai year, let me offer a framework for one portion of that culture: A renewed culture of giving. Two of our long standing members, immediate past President Harry Wittenberg and General Board member Sandy Gross have developed this framework in conjunction with your Board of Trustees. And it looks like this.



continued on page 5

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL NEWS

By Keren Smith, Director of Education



Being Thankful,

Our Jewish year begins with a time to reflect, to put our past year on a proverbial scale and measure up actions we are proud of and wrong doings; or things we want to change. By the time our American Thanksgiving rolls around, about two months later, we have cleared the slate, started a new year, reinvigorated to do more *Tikun Olam*, repairing the world, and put more effort to be our best selves. Our secular calendar allows us for a beautiful opportunity to stop our hectic life just for a moment and be thankful for what we have.

There is a saying in Hebrew that comes from the Mishna (the first part of the Talmud embodying the oral Jewish law):
איזה הוא העשירי? השמחה בחלקו!

Who is Rich? The one who is happy with what he has! This saying goes hand in hand with our secular tradition of taking time to appreciate what we have; happily celebrating the feeling of gratitude with our family and friends.

Just before Thanksgiving arrives, I would like to ask you to join me in thinking about our school. In early November I will be holding a vision meeting; a small group discussion about the direction of the school. I would love for you to come and share your opinions about the direction of our school as we continue to evolve and better ourselves. Each member of our parent community has valuable thoughts and opinions, and I would love for you to be involved, and join us in this focus group style meeting. Space is very limited, there are two sessions from which to choose, the first is on a Thursday evening November 10th between 7:00 -9:00, the second one is the following Sunday November 13th between 10:00 – 12:00. There are 10 spots in each and some of the space has already been filled. If you are interested in participating in this focus group style Vision Meeting, please contact me.

I wish you and your family a wonderful and meaningful Holiday season; a Thanksgiving that will make all of us feel gratitude and find the richness in our lives. And shortly after Thanksgiving, eight days of Hanukkah, the festival of lights – reminding us of our shared history, the gift of religious freedom and the wonders of spending time with loved ones.

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SISTERHOOD NEWS

By Rayna Ravitz, President

Many new ideas were brought up at our annual brunch for Sisterhood to enjoy. Dee Hirsch mentioned two museums to visit – one is scheduled for December 11 and the other one is the Disney Museum. We'll be looking for a date for that visit in the Spring. For December we will journey to Stockton to the Haggin Museum where there is a special Dave Brubeck Exhibit. There is also a Guitar Exhibit at the gallery. The Haggin Museum is an art and local history museum.

I am happy to tell you that there will be a Women's Seder, April 2, led by Cantor Chabon.

UPCOMING EVENTS

November

11 (Friday): East Bay Regional Park Walk, 9:30 am
Meet Liz Roberts at Briones Regional Park, Reliez Valley Road. Walk Together- enjoy the beautiful regional parks for a morning walk/hike. Easy pace, mostly flat. Plan on 2-4 miles. Will depend on how many show up. Briones Reg. Park, parking lot at staging area off Reliez Valley Road. May be a parking fee of \$5.

Contact Liz Roberts for more info, link to park/map. Email, lizard94517@pacbell.net. Cell/text 925-212-5649. Liz is interested in more walks that this one, contact her for more information.

15 (Tuesday): Book Sisters, 6:30 pm, CBT
"Frog Music" by Emma Donoghue
Discussion Leader – Beth Riseman
Dinner from Morucci's - \$10
please RSVP to: krimack@astound.net

December

11 (Sunday): Haggin Museum Trip, noon, Stockton
1201 N. Pershing Ave., Stockton
Exhibit: Dave Brubeck: Jazz Ambassador
Spouses are invited.

RSVP: raynaravitz@gmail.com

20 (Tuesday): Sisterhood Chanukah Party, 6:30 pm, CBT
Potluck Dinner
We will make no-sew blankets.
Bring an unwrapped toy for "Toys for Tots"
RSVP: raynaravitz@gmail.com

January

22 (Sunday): Book Sisters, 10:30 am, Ellen's House
"Japanese Lover" by Isabel Allende
Discussion Leader – Ellen Duree
Potluck Brunch
rsvp: raynaravitz@gmail.com

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

Lori Siegel & Katie Alberts, Max & Sarah

Lauren & Jay Schloss, Kenzie & Paige

Hilary Friedman

Alison Cohen & Matthew Reider, Max & Zoe

Judith & Chad Isserman, Gabriel & Kaleb

Melissa & Sean Barclay, Gavin & Nora

Tori & Jamie DeCoite, Colton, Noah & Tripp

Judy & Bradley Colton

Victoria & Jason Berger, Hanna

Sara Duckler & Richard Millet, Rachel & Isabella

Sara Frame & Jonathan Meyers, Abigail & Eliana

See page 9 for Notes on New Members.

SHALOM CONNECTION

Mazel Tov to:

Michael Fisher & Cheryl Farr on the birth of their grandson
Mason James Fischer

Marc and Debbie Usatin on the birth of their grandson
Xavier Stefan

Cathy and Tamarak Arebalo on the birth of their
granddaughter Hayden Catherine Martin

Condolences to:

Barbara Felix and family on the loss of her sister, Libby Levin

David Specland and family on the loss of his sister, Shirley
Werter

Gene Miller and family on the loss of his mother,
Birdie Miller

Alex Negoescu and family on the loss of her mother long—
time member Anca Negoescu.

Ivy Noceto and family on the loss of her father Paul Rogen

Debbie Raphael, Kim Wies and family on the loss of their
mother, Susan Spivock

Have something to share? Please let us know! Email
amanda@tikvah.org.

Interested in helping at CBT?

We need office volunteers to come in at least one afternoon a
week to help with various office tasks.

Please contact Amanda at amanda@tikvah.org to join the
team.

MANY THANKS

The Ritual Committee would like to thank all those who helped in making the High Holidays a successful and enriching time for all of us. We would specifically like to thank Idelle Lipman, Herb Sher, and their helpers for organizing Selichot desserts and Havdallah. We would like to thank Bob Grossman and the Men of CBT who organized the move to and from St. Matthew, the congregants who supplied apples and honey after both the children and adult Rosh Hashanah services, Martha Jensen for helping with the flowers, and Bonnie Potter and the countless congregants who organized our break – the-fast, supplied food and helped with clean up. Thank you to Steve Rabinowitz and our CBT carpenters for building (and taking down) the sukkah. Thank you to Jordana Green, Keren Smith and the religious school for organizing the decoration of the sukkah, and the Tikvah Tones for providing music at Simchat Torah. We apologize in advance if we have forgotten anyone. We thank you all. We also hope that you found the giving of your time a rewarding experience. Thank you again.

SHALOM, B'NAI TIKVAH

continued from page 1

er too late to begin. After all, Hillel and Rabbi Akiva, who were central sages in the first century AD didn't begin their studies until they were 40. Today it is hard to imagine Jewish literature without their voices and their wisdom.

Among the many events and programs at B'nai Tikvah during these final months of 2016, I want to highlight one in particular. On Saturday evening December 17, all are invited to join in "The Jewish Night of Why." We'll begin with a potluck dinner at 6:30pm followed by Havdallah. Then everyone will have a chance to write down their questions, place them in the proverbial hat, and Cantor Chabon and I will draw them and respond. We look forward to a lively discussion that will give everyone a chance to see that no one knows everything, but everyone knows something! That's why journeys of learning are best undertaken together.

Please bring a dairy dish to share, a bottle of wine if you like and the Jewish questions on your mind. RSVP to Janet Brandess at jbrandess08@gmail.com for The Jewish Night of Why no later than Thursday December 15.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

continued from page 3

The culture of giving we're introducing today will be part of our double Chai conversations where we'll set a course to retire the mortgage on our building and enable a sustainable future for ourselves and future members of B'nai Tikvah. Now I know what you're thinking... "Wait a second, that guy said he wasn't going to ask for money, and now he's asking us for money? What gives?" Nope. I'm just providing this framework for you to reflect on between now and Yom Kippur.

So here it is in nutshell: There are three primary ways to contribute to B'nai Tikvah: Annual Giving, Capital Giving and Legacy Giving. On the left side is annual giving which includes our membership contributions, the annual campaign – you know that thing I'll talk about at Yom Kippur – and participating in the various fundraisers we have through the year. This annual giving funds our operations and ideally builds some reserves for the proverbial rainy day.

On the right side is Legacy giving which is a way to remember B'nai Tikvah in your estate planning. To date, almost 30 of our members have participated in legacy giving with a pledge to include B'nai Tikvah in their long range financial planning. Thanks to a grant program through the Grinspoon Foundation, that participation netted us \$10,000 in 2016 and, assuming we have eight or nine more families participate, will net us another \$10,000 in 2017.

Finally, in the center of the slide, is Capital giving. We had a very successful capital campaign about 15 years ago to fund the renovation of our sanctuary, build our beautiful social hall, of-

fices and kitchen and add more classrooms for our school. But that was a while back, and the multi-year commitments from that campaign are or will soon expire, so it's time to reinvigorate this important component of our culture of giving. We won't be making any big capital improvements this time, but rather looking to retire our mortgage through some innovative ways of contributing including an adopt a month program where you can sustain our community by picking a month or maybe a couple of months each year to remember a Simcha or Yartzite with an annual pledge to the capital campaign. Again, more to come on all of this soon.

So there it is... The culture of giving and an introduction of our double Chai. Now take out those cards and... Oh wait, that's for another day. But seriously, we want your reflections on all of this. So instead, take out these cards. We want to hear your thoughts about our community, our activities, our spirituality, whatever you're thinking about B'nai Tikvah. These cards will be available here and at CBT for you to jot down your reflections about the state of our temple: a word, a brief phrase a sentence, but no novels please. We'll use these reflections to chart our course, form our double Chai and our future. Additionally, after these High Holy Days, we'll be sending our membership an electronic survey where you can provide additional thoughts on where we're heading as a community.

B'nai Tikvah has a bright future as we move confidently into our double Chai year. We have a lot to be grateful for, and sustaining those opportunities for our current and future community members is the greatest mitzvah we can imagine.

In closing, let me thank you again for the honor of serving as the president of B'nai Tikvah. La Shana Tovah Tikatevu... May you have a sweet and happy new year.

CONTRIBUTIONS

GENERAL FUND

Roni and Paul Melmed

In memory of David Nathan Lapporte

In memory of Riva Lapporte

Seymour Lapporte

In memory of Kay Bernstein Tucker

Dale Tucker

In memory of Esther Vineberg

Joni Vineberg

In memory of Ida Nankin and Sam Blumberg

Alvin Trepper

In memory of Geraldine Berres and

Marni Levine

Kim and Brian Zagon

In memory of Toni Levyn

Terri and Brent Waterman

In memory of Beatrice Sauve

Annette and Michael Cohn

In memory of Dorothy Tobias

In memory of Chester Tobias

Carol and Allan Tobias

In memory of Judy Blum's mother,

Regina Deutsch

Laura and Bruce Presnick

Lisa and Howard Wenger

In honor of Barbara & Harvey Samuels's

50th Wedding Anniversary

Ruth and Larry Goldenberg

In memory of Star Kaplan

Iris Kaplan

In memory of Richard Katz

Karen Lapin

In memory of Morris Bikoff

In memory of Edward Ravitz

In memory of Bertha Stern

In memory of David Stern

Rayna and Richard Ravitz

In memory of Margaret Ghirado

Rachel Van Cleave and Joe Schottland

In memory of Dave Appleberg

Idelle Lipman

In memory of Esther Rapoport

Cookie Svingos

In memory of Avrum-Moyshe Sadetskiy

In memory of Peisah Sadetskiy

In memory of Yuri Moskalkenko

In memory of Sara Sadetskiy

Rakhil Sadetskiy

In memory of Harry Rabiner

Karen Lapin

In memory of Roland Forest Tullis

Christine and Murray Sheldon

With gratitude to Judy Blum

In memory of Jerome Berres

Kim and Brian Zagon

In memory of Sy Block

Colleen and Randall Block

RABBI GUTTERMAN'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

In appreciation of Janet Goodman

Beth and Carl Riseman

In gratitude to Rabbi Gutterman

Amy Rassen and Rabbi Donna Adler

In memory of Lisa Gewing

Anna and Walter Gewing

In honor of Barbara & Harvey Samuels's

50th Wedding Anniversary

Rosemarie Wheeler and Mike Portnoff

In honor of Zachary Roberson's Bar Mitzvah

Caron Treger and Brian Roberson

In memory of Fae Asher

Jennifer Rosenberg and Rabbi Raphael

Asher

CANTOR CHABON'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

In memory of William Tama

Hugh Tama

In honor of Cantor Jennie Chabon

Hilary Friedman

In honor of Zachary Roberson's Bar Mitzvah

Caron Treger and Brian Roberson

In memory of Fae Asher

Jennifer Rosenberg and Rabbi Raphael

Asher

RABBI ASHER'S EMERITUS FUND

In memory of Fae Asher

Lisa and Howard Wenger

Tina Guterman and Doug Polcin

CANTOR'S MUSIC FUND

In memory of Ben Brown

Sharon and Ron Brown

In honor of our music programs

Carla Garrett

In memory of Rose Beard

In memory of Max Wilk

Nessa and Bob Wilk

In memory of Esther Rapoport

Cookie Svingos

In honor of Cantor Jennie Chabon

Cookie Svingos

JAMES COHEN SCHOLARSHIP FUND

In memory of Sandy McRenolds

Diane and Victor Leventhal

CANTOR STEPHEN RICHARDS CHOIR FUND

In memory of Stephanie Woldman and
Myron Woldman

In memory of Adele Morse Platt

In memory of Fae Asher

In memory of Regina Deutsch

In memory of Ruth Ellis Wise

Cantor Stephen and Marjorie Richards

In memory of Ruth Schultz Goldenberg

Ruth and Larry Goldenberg

STEPHAN JASPAN RELIGIOUS SCHOOL FUND

In memory of Stephen Slavet

Andrea and Benjamin Slavet

In memory of Max Weiner

Shirley and Jeffrey Weiner

MORDOH/NADJARI HOLOCAUST FUND

In loving memory of Regina Deutsch

Susan and John Klein

SOCIAL ACTION FUND

In honor Barbara and Harvey Samuels'

50th Wedding Anniversary

Lynn and Hank Fanger

In memory of Lily Maslow

Michael Fischer

HELP THE MORTGAGE FUND

In memory of Fae Asher

Kathy and Marc Berger

Jennifer Rosenberg and Rabbi Raphael

Asher

In memory of Judy Blum's mother,

Regina Deutsch

Barbara and Bill Almy

Lance and Bob Canter

Kathy and Marc Berger

Susan and John Rubinfeld

The Blum Family

In memory of David Specland's sister,

Shirley Werter

Judy and Walt Blum

In memory of Erwin Ferer

Paula Reinman and Sandy Gross

JOSEPH ASHER MEMORIAL LECTURE FUND

In memory of Fae Asher

Muriel Rosenberg

Jennifer Rosenberg and Rabbi Raphael

Asher

continued on page 7

REMEMBERING CHILDHOOD: WORKSHOP YOUR WAY TO A FINISHED MEMOIR



Four Wednesdays beginning
January 4
10:00 AM
Held at Congregation B'nai Tikvah
Admission: \$75

Put pen to paper at the very first session. Leslie Ruple, author of *Remembering Childhood and Beyond the Silk Mills*, will help you revisit poignant episodes in your life. In this hands-on series, she will provide written feedback on your work and tips for preserving your memories for future generations. Space is limited to 15 people so register early to Congregation B'nai Tikvah.

Sponsored by: Congregation B'nai Tikvah & Diablo Valley Hadassah.

CONTRIBUTIONS

PRAYERBOOK FUND

continued from page 6

In honor of Judy Blum's mother, Regina Deutsch
Robin and Larry Gordon
Chanel and Tracy Benhamou
Nancy and Art Solomon
Mary Ann and Harry Wittenberg

TREE OF LIFE

In memory of Martin Fink
Michael Fine

NEWS ABOUT THE CONTRA COSTA JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER

As you probably know, the building on Tice Valley Road was sold and is being developed by Pulte Homes. However, The CCJCC is still in existence and is bringing programs like "Under One Tent" and the "CC International Jewish Film Festival." The JCC Board would like to keep in touch with interested people, please check out our new website: ccjcc.org and sign up for the distribution list.

Rayna Ravitz, Board Member

Save money on your electric bills with solar AND raise money for CBT!

Did you know Congregation B'nai Tikvah just installed 20 kilowatts of SunPower® solar on the roof? We're now generating clean, renewable energy and saving money on the temple's electric bills every day.

As a member of Congregation B'nai Tikvah, you can benefit from going solar too. Not only can you save money on your own electric bills, but you're eligible for a **special \$1,500 mail-in rebate** on the purchase or lease of a SunPower home solar system.

Plus, an anonymous benefactor will donate **\$518 to the temple** for every member who goes solar as a way to say thank you for helping change the way our world is powered.

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CONTRA COSTA MIDRASHA

By Devra C. Aarons, CCM Director

Contra Costa Midrasha invites all our community partners to SAVE the DATE on Saturday, February 25, 2017 for our annual GALA! This year our theme, “Peace, Love and Midrasha” will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the summer of love with great 60’s music, costumes and décor. Join us at the San Ramon Community Center that evening for a fun evening of dinner, dancing and celebrating Contra Costa Midrasha and the work we do for teens and their families.

This High Holiday season CCM teens, staff and Board Members were given the honor at all three of our partner synagogues to share some reflections about the impacts of Jewish education on their lives. Here are the highlights of those speeches: (Note: The full transcripts of all speeches can be found at CCM’s website: www.ccmidrasha.com/high-holidays.)

Ysabel Munoz, a Midrasha senior and Beth Chaim member shared, “I encourage everyone to find their own feeling of Hineini, like I did in my Beth Chaim and Midrasha communities. I invite you all to physically turn and open yourself up to every experience and embrace them while being fully in the moment and present. You will be surprised, like I was, with how much you can teach yourself.”

Nieves Winslow, a Midrasha senior and B’nai Tikvah member said, “Midrasha is a place that fosters creative thinking and action. I’ve learned how to find texts in the Talmud that are relevant to modern society, and although there are usually not concrete answers, there is always a greater understanding of Judaism. B’nai Tikvah and Midrasha have also taught me the skills I needed to be a responsible person.”

Andrew Clauson, a Midrasha parent and Board Member and B’nai Tikvah member explained, “Midrasha seeks to support the teen’s own quest to navigate the social, moral, and emotional realities of life. It becomes the crucible that helps provide the WHY, HOW and WHEN of Judaism to these young people who, arguably, are the most in need of what religion

provides. Midrasha provides the support, but the kids themselves are the ones who step forward and actually take the act of being Jewish each day upon themselves, in their daily actions as well as the programs provided.”

I (Devra Aarons) had the opportunity to talk with B’nai Shalom about our new Better Together project, “These groups of teens and elders will spend this year getting to know each other, sharing stories and experiences all in an effort to create intergenerational links and gain wisdom from each other - to make L’dor V’dor (from generation to generation) a reality.”

Speaking of “Better Together” the project continues at break-neck speed! I invite you to read the lovely article in the Oct. 21st edition of the J. Weekly that explains the project’s aims. We met again on October 23rd and have another session planned for Veteran’s Day – when our whole teens community is invited to honor the veterans living at Reutlinger and to engage in a service project for vets in the broader Contra Costa area.

Midrasha continues its 2016-17 year! CCM has ongoing enrollment – teens are invited to come check out whenever they like. Join in – to inspire and do good work in the community, to be heard, to relax and to grow their own Jewish identity. To enroll today, make a donation, or find out more about CCM’s programs, visit our website at www.ccmidrasha.com. Or contact the office via phone at 925/944-4701 or e-mail at contracostamidrasha@gmail.com. See you on a Wednesday night this year!





JEWISH NIGHT OF WHY

Saturday evening December 17

Potluck dinner at 6:30pm followed by Havdallah and program.

This is your chance to ask Rabbi Gutterman & Cantor Chabon those questions you have been wrestling with for a long time or one you just thought of that day!

It promises to be a lively discussion and a night filled with both questions and answers.

Please bring a dairy dish to share, a bottle of wine if you like and the Jewish questions on your mind.

RSVP to Janet Brandess at jbrandesso8@gmail.com by Thursday December 15.



TIKVAH L'ATID
HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Paula Reinman and Sandy Gross

For us, community and culture are an important part of Judaism. Sandy's first real experience with a Jewish community came from Camp Swig, first as a camper and later as part of the staff. Paula attended Swig as a camper, all the way from Albuquerque. Lifelong friendships resulted from those summers.

After having our two wonderful children and beginning to shul shop, we chose Congregation B'nai Tikvah for its warmth and intimacy. Our children grew up at B'nai Tikvah and we continue to have that sense of community with many in the congregation. We participate in Legacy because we hope that B'nai Tikvah will be there for future generations seeking a community filled with lots of love and friends – so much like our days at Camp Swig.



REFLECTIONS...

continued from page 1

Campbell, who said that, People say that what we're all seeking is a meaning for life. I don't think that's what we're really seeking. I think that what we're seeking is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonances with our own innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive. That's what it's finally all about..."

The problem with this experience is that after the high is an inevitable crash, a devastating heart shattering in the knowing that this feeling is temporary and rare, and not the place where we normally exist. It is the realization that we live our lives on this emotional and spiritual roller coaster from the time we are babies, going from peak to valley to peak, over and over again, never really happy in the middle. Why are we never given the message that contentment is actually great, that good enough is actually something to strive for, that peaceful is a fantastic ideal. At what point did our society decide that ecstatic experiences and *A pluses and more, more, more is what will make us happiest?*

A few weeks ago, as I was putting Judah, my four year old, to bed, he turned to me and said, "Ima, when I'm really happy, I'm also sad." "Why?" I asked him. His answer? "Because it's so beautiful." Even my four year old understands that happiness is fleeting, and that it comes at a cost, that on the other side of happiness is the longing for it when it's gone. That moments of supreme happiness gives us a break from the truth that we are all made up of beautiful, broken pieces longing to be made whole again.

One of the ways in which we are most unkind to ourselves is to assume that our brokenness is unique, that we alone are shattered while others are happy and complete, not suffering like we are. Our whole world supports this idea. Just take one look at Facebook and the perfection that people choose to post about their lives. Everyone else is surely a better parent, with more self-control and happier kids and a more beautiful house than any of ours, right? If we just lose this weight, or buy this thing, or snip or cut or color or change ourselves, then we'll be happy, then we'll be whole, then our own brokenness won't be so devastating.

But here's the thing: it is from our broken places that we are able to let the light in. According to the medieval kabbalists, the world was created when God contracted God's self, in a process called *tsimtsum*, and then exploded into energy so vast and powerful that perfect reality was shattered, and the material world was created. It is only because of the shattering of perfection that the world exists today.

We cannot, must not, hide from our imperfections and broken hearts. We must offer our brokenness to one another and lift up this shattered world of ours. As we pick up our broken pieces, may we all experience moments of exquisite grace that fill us with light and hope for the work to come.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT CBT

Date: Sunday, December 4
Time: 3-5 PM
Location: Congregation B'nai Tikvah
Cost: \$25



The New Mediterranean Jewish Table with Chef Joyce Goldstein

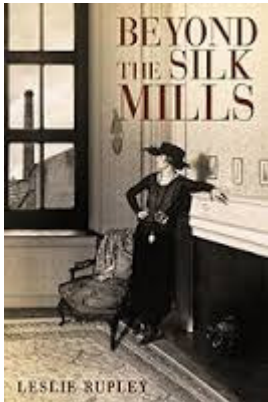
Are you and your family tired of traditional Ashkenazi Jewish Cuisine? Do brisket and kugel seem too fatty for your diet? Come and hear Joyce Goldstein, a Bay Area legend and founding owner of Square One restaurant in San Francisco, describe a revitalization of Jewish cuisine. She's on a crusade to showcase recipes from the diaspora that she characterizes as fresher and healthier than most of our Jewish holiday fare.

Prepare to be inspired by Chef Goldstein, who at the age of 80 after a long and distinguished career as a chef, consultant, and author of award-winning cookbooks, has presented us with her newest collection of recipes.

This latest book, *The New Mediterranean Jewish Table: Old World Recipes for the Modern Home*, has 420 recipes from North Africa, Libya, Egypt, and from Mizrahi Jews in the Muslim world. Copies of the new cookbook will be available for purchase at the event.

Sample some of her small bites prepared by our own Chef Alison Negrin.

Q and A and book signing will follow.



Date: Wednesday, December 7
Time: 10:30 AM
Location: Congregation B'nai Tikvah
Cost: \$5
Beyond the Silk Mills

Historical Fiction from Inception to Print

One simple question about her grandmother's past drove Leslie Rupley to undertake a tireless adventure to solve the riddle. The author will share how she created *Beyond the Silk Mills*, a historically rich Jewish immigrant saga of love, obsession, and regret from the results of her quest.

With humorous details about crafting a plot and developing engaging characters, she'll highlight her diligent research to ensure that the early twentieth century Paterson, New Jersey setting is historically accurate from the clothing, speech, and household furnishings to the political environment during the emerging post-industrial labor movement.

Q and A, book signing to follow.

Sponsored by: Congregation B'nai Tikvah & Diablo Valley Hadassah

RSVP for both events to Amanda at:
amanda@tikvah.org or call 925-933-5397

UNDER ONE TENT

Contra Costa's Jewish Book & Arts Festival
Fall/Winter 2016-2017

NOVEMBER 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Religious School 10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah	2 10:00am Open Bridge 7:15pm Midrasha 7:30pm AIPAC Event with Speaker David Meyerson-	3	4 4th & 5th Grade Weekend Retreat at Camp Newman 11:30am - 12:30pm Tum e Time 5:30pm Tot Shabbat 6:00pm Gotta Eatta Pita Dinner 6:30pm Family Shabbat Service	5 4th & 5th Grade Weekend Retreat at Camp Newman Parashat Noach 9:00am Lay Led Torah Study 10:00am Shabbat Service - Bar Mitzvah of Jeremiah Mintz
6 4th & 5th Grade Weekend Retreat at Camp Newman Religious School	7	8 Religious School 10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah	9 10:00am Open Bridge 7:15pm Midrasha	10	11 11:30am - 12:30pm Tum e Time 6:30pm Shabbat Service - 2nd Grade Service	12 Parashat Lech-Lecha 9:00am Lay Led Torah Study 10:00am Shabbat Service - Bat Mitzvah of Rachel Hunter
13 Religious School 10:30am Walking in the Valley Class	14 6:00pm Executive Board Meeting 7:00pm - 9:00pm Education Committee Meeting 7:30pm Ritual Committee Meeting	15 Religious School 10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah 6:30pm Book Sisters- "Frog Music" by Emma Donoghue	16 10:00am Open Bridge 7:15pm Midrasha	17 4:00pm - 6:00pm 3rd Thursday @ Tikvah	18 11:30am - 12:30pm Tum e Time 7:30pm Shir Joy	19 Parashat Vayera 9:00am Lay Led Torah Study 6:00pm - 11:00pm Trivia Night!
20 No School 10:00am - 11:00am Social Action Committee Meeting 11:00am - 12:00pm Mussar Meeting	21 10:00am - 1:00pm Office Open 10:00-1:00	22 No School 10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah 10:00am - 1:00pm Office Open 10:00-1:00	23 10:00am - 1:00pm Office Open 10:00-1:00 pm 10:00am Open Bridge	24 (Office closed) Thanksgiving	25 (Office closed) 7:30pm Shabbat Service	26 Parashat Chayei Sara 9:00am Lay Led Torah Study
27 No School	28 5:30pm - 6:30pm Executive Board 6:30pm General Board Meeting	29 Religious School 10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah	30 10:00am Open Bridge 7:15pm Midrasha			

Check the website and weekly emails for most up to date calendar information.

Hanukkah Celebrations

Friday, December 23 at 7:30 pm

Join us for our Shir Joy service with our fabulous choir followed by latkes and jelly doughnuts.

Friday, December 30 at 6:30 pm

Bring your menorah as we light the 7th candle during services.

DECEMBER 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
					11:30am - 12:30pm Tum e Time	Parashat Toldot
					5:30pm Tot Shabbat	9:00am Lay Led Torah Study
					6:00pm Pasta Dinner	10:00am Shabbat Service - Bar Mitzvah of Zachary Dietderich
					6:30pm Family Shabbat Service	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Religious School		Religious School	10:00am Open Bridge		6:30pm Shabbat Service	Parashat Vayetzei
10:00am Walking in the Valley Class		10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah	7:15pm Midrasha			9:00am Lay Led Torah Study
3:00pm - 5:00pm Under One Tent - Joyce Goldstein						10:00am Morning Minyan
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Religious School	5:30pm Executive Board Meeting	Religious School	10:00am Open Bridge	4:00pm - 6:00pm 3rd Thursday @ Tikvah	7:30pm Shir Joy	Parashat Vayishlach
	7:00pm - 9:00pm Education Committee Meeting	10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah	7:15pm Midrasha			9:00am Lay Led Torah Study
	7:30pm Ritual Committee Meeting					10:00am Morning Minyan
						7:00pm Jewish Night of Why!
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
No School		No School	10:00am Open Bridge		7:30pm Shabbat Service - w/ Choir & Latkes	Chanukah: 1st night
10:00am - 11:00am Social Action Committee Meeting		10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah				Parashat Vayeshev
11:00am - 12:00pm Mussar Meeting		6:30pm Sisterhood: Chanukah Party- Potluck Dinner				9:00am Lay Led Torah Study
						10:00am Morning Minyan
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Chanukah: 2nd night	(Office closed)	Chanukah: 4th night	Chanukah: 5th night	Chanukah: 6th night	Chanukah: 7th night	Chanukah: 8th night
No School	Chanukah: 3rd night	No School	10:00am Open Bridge		6:30pm Shabbat Service	Parashat Miketz
		10:00am - 11:00am Jewish Meditation - A Taste of Torah				9:00am Lay Led Torah Study
						10:00am Morning Minyan

Check the website and weekly emails for most up to date calendar information.

Do you like to travel?

Are you planning vacations in exotic destinations? Bert Gunter is interested in starting a travel group of CBT and local unaffiliated folks who would be interested in meeting on a regular (e.g. monthly) basis to share experiences and ideas on all things travel, including venues, tips, ways to go, etc. Exact format TBD. If you or someone you know might be interested, please email Bert at bgunter@comcast.net.

COLLECTION DRIVES

December 4- 17

The Social Action Committee will be collecting:
adult & child coats, scarves, hats, gloves &
toiletries.

All items will be donated to Vestia.

Collection bins and racks will be in the CBT Foyer.

Any questions contact Diane Leventhal:
ladydiofalamo1@netzero.com

A Trio of Musical Magic

Date: Saturday, January 14

Time: 7:30 PM

Location: Congregation B'nai Tikvah

Cost: \$25 (includes refreshments)



Back by Popular Demand! You won't want to miss the outstanding performance by French Jewish concert pianist, jazz vocalist and actress Marina Pacowski. Our stellar evening also features our own Cantor Jennie Chabon and Harry Wittenberg on bass.

Tickets available on brownpapertickets.com.



ADULT EDUCATION COMMITTEE NEEDS YOUR HELP

This will be an exciting year for Adult Education programs at CBT. Some of the programs we are planning include:

The Jewish Night of Why – an evening in which you get a chance to ask all those questions about Jewish traditions you never understood

Two co-sponsored classes with Lehrhaus Judaica – a reprise of the class on Jewish approaches to questions related to end of life issues and a new introduction to Jewish philosophy

An interfaith dialogue and introductions to the many faith communities in Contra Costa County

A program for religious school parents providing a little more depth to the family education program

Continuation of our Mussar Group

Development of new Introduction to Judaism classes

Planning for a family camping outing and special Havdallah discussions

These programs will bring a new richness to our community, but they can't be offered without the help of volunteers to organize, advertise and participate. To start planning for our 2017 program, the Adult Education Committee will meet at the synagogue on Thursday evening, November 10, at 7 pm. If you would like more information or can't attend but would be interested in helping out, please contact Michael Fischer at 925-212-9653 or mjf1155@gmail.com

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THANK YOU!

Thank you to Irene & Art Korn and the CBT Giftshop for donating our new AED machine. This AED defibrillator can and will save lives. It's final home will be in the upstairs foyer, but for now, look for the sign on the door where it is located.

Shopping at the Gift Shop benefits your congregation!



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.

www.eastbaychildrensbookproject.org



Have YOU visited the Tzedakah box in our Lobby?

All donations received through December will be sent to

Donate Life

This organizations was selected by our Social Action Committee.

www.ccjds.org

K-8th Grade Open House
 Sunday, December 4
 3:30-5:00pm

Check Us Out Day
 Friday, November 11
 1st - 7th grade students are invited to visit our classrooms

Middle School Open House
 Thursday, January 19, 2017
 6:00-8:00pm

Private tours by appointment, call our admissions office.

great kids going places

A Community Jewish Day School
 Kindergarten-8th Grade
 955 Risa Road, Lafayette, CA
 925.284.8288
 admissions@ccjds.org

The Contra Costa Jewish DAY SCHOOL

Congregation B'nai Tikvah
25 Hillcroft Way
Walnut Creek, CA 94597

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For membership information, please contact the Temple Office.

Hanukkah Boutique

Shop the Gift Shop for all your Hanukkah Needs



December 4

December 11

9:30 am—12:00 pm

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