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# Tikvah Talk

Vol. 32 Iss. 8

Congregation B'nai Tikvah Walnut Creek, CA

April 2013

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## From Where I Stand....

By Rabbi Raphael Asher



A good Sunday School education can make us aware that our Jewish holidays convey meaning on 3 levels: seasonal, historical, and ethical. Passover, with its Haggadah Teachers' Manual transmits an appreciation for Spring's renewal, for our recurring bouts with the world's Pharaohs, and for the nature and indispensability of freedom. In my upcoming course, however, I am going to propose a 4<sup>th</sup> dimension of wisdom which has sustained Judaism and, more subtly, nourished the Jewish people.

On Thursday evenings in April and May our class will explore "Judaism and Psychology." In 8 sessions we will explore how ancient themes like atonement, exile, and the Law can illuminate the more modern themes of guilt, alienation, and mental health.

I am very pleased that for one of these sessions we will be joined in the Library by Rabbi Gordon Freeman, Rabbi Emeritus of B'nai Shalom. For over 30 years he has been a great colleague and friend, and I'd like to think that our friendship and mutual respect have contributed in some way to the psychological welfare of the Walnut Creek Jewish community. Rabbi Freeman will be discussing one of the themes in his upcoming book in a lecture titled, "Who Can You Trust?"

Probing more deeply into the rituals and many texts of our tradition, we can discover that Passover can be an antidote for arrogance and Sukkot good therapy for melancholy. The very act of just studying our Torah on a regular basis can yield personal insights and stability; finding a favorite mitzvah to perform can bring discipline to our scattered lives.

I hope you'll consider joining our Adult B'nai Mitzvah core group to help extract fine new wine from the old flasks of our tradition.

First session Thursday, April 4, 7 - 8:30pm. Contact the Temple office to register.

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## Reflections...

By Cantor Jennie Chabon



One of the many things I love about being Jewish is the fact that rituals are woven into the fabric of our tradition. We have rituals for birth, first hair cut, b'nai mitzvah, engagement, weddings, baby namings, funerals, shiva, unveilings, rosh chodesh, recovering from illness, putting up a mezuzah, shema before bedtime...name an event in life, and we probably have a blessing or a ceremony for it! These rituals are essential to the vitality of our tradition because they infuse holy moments into our otherwise generally mundane, busy lives. They shake us out of our routines and remind us of the importance of community and faith. Even a ritual as simple as lighting Shabbat candles on Friday night can have a profound and lasting effect on our sense of well-being and connectedness in the world.

As rich as our tradition is in ceremonies and rituals, I was surprised to discover recently that there is no ritual to mark the end of *shloshim*, the thirty day period after a person has died. I was asked to create a ritual for a young woman in our congregation who lost her father recently, since she has been having a very hard time moving on. Though we held a beautiful funeral for her father, she was never able to sit shiva for him, so she never got to have closure on those first, intense days of mourning.

Because I couldn't find any ceremonies for this kind of occasion, I decided to create a ritual based on shiva, with a few readings that are done traditionally at shiva, but with a decidedly different feel. We held the ceremony in her father's house, where she is most comfortable and where she would have sat shiva had she been able. I want to share some of what happened that day with you because it was very special and it really highlights the beauty and depth of our tradition.

We started by lighting a candle and doing a few lovely readings taken from the service for a house of mourning. I sang a few psalms and then shared this Chassidic teaching: it is taught that during the 7 days of shiva, a person's soul stays with you, in your house, as you mourn. After the 7 days, you take a walk around the block to escort the person's soul away and to begin the rest of your life without them. I explained that the purpose of the gathering was for this young woman to be able to say goodbye to her father. I in

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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

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### ***Upcoming B'nai Mitzvah***

*Jeremy Kaplan*  
*Son of Steven Kaplan and Deborah Kaplan*  
*Saturday, April 6*

*Jamie Rados*  
*Daughter of Alyse and Steve Rados*  
*Saturday, April 20*

*Rebekah Chappell*  
*Daughter of Deborah Chappell*  
*Saturday, April 27*

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

#### ***Welcome to our new members.....***

Irina and Jacob Spivak  
 Aviv 7/15/2007  
 Naomi 1/2/2009

#### ***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 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.

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## President's Message

By John Rubinfeld



One of the topics I mentioned during High Holyday services was the launching of our new website. Well, I'm very excited to announce that day is soon arriving. This month we will be transitioning to a more robust webpage that will include many additional features such as easier access to information, sample music from Shir Joy, a more integrated calendar; daily feeds from the URJ on current topics of the Reform movement, and much more. This could not have been a reality without the blood, sweat and tears of Dan Lapporte, Judy Blum and the Online Communications Committee. Additionally, I want to especially thank Jonathan Winchell for his financial and technical support! After reviewing the test site, I think you're really going to be impressed. I look forward to your feedback.

As you know, we are always looking for new members to join our shtetl. With the closing of the CCJCC, that's one less opportunity we have. A primary reason a new member joins our community is when they hear directly from one of us the old Alka Seltzer slogan, "Try it, you'll like it." Many of our new members join because their children are of school age. This is the time unaffiliated families go Religious School/Temple shopping. We're fortunate that our school has an excellent reputation, but getting the word out is a challenge. For the past few years, each May we've invited prospective members to join us for a casual pizza dinner followed by a Family Shabbat service when our adorable Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade students participate in the service. This year it's May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Phil Hankin will be attending and he can discuss our fabulous Religious School (i.e. give a tour of the classrooms, introduce some of the teachers, students, discuss a typical day, etc.). We can use your help. If you know or meet someone unaffiliated, please ask them to join us on the 3<sup>rd</sup> or contact Jen Paul for more details. People don't generally respond to ads in newspapers. They respond to invitations. We have a wonderful community; trust me, there's more room!

Rabbi Asher will be well-rested from his three month sabbatical as he'll be very busy - leading our community Passover Seder on his first day back, leading a two month discussion about Judaism and Psychology, and all the upcoming B'nai Mitzvahs. During his time away, Rabbi Jerry Levy did a wonderful job filling in. Not only did he lead some of our Shabbat services, he oversaw several lifecycle events (a Bat Mitzvah and unfortunately too many funerals) plus he participated in Purim and many school activities. With Rabbi Asher retiring in 15 months, I think in many ways this was a great opportunity for the community to see another perspective on the areas mentioned above and get us prepared for that day. On behalf of the congregation, Rabbi Levy, we are grateful for you being part of our shtetl. I know you won't be a stranger! We look forward to seeing you at future CBT events.

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## Turn It, Turn It, Turn It Again

By Phil Hankin, Director of Education



Have you ever heard the phrase:  
**All I Really Need To Know I Learned in Kindergarten.**

Why do you think that phrase rings true? It is because in Kindergarten we begin the formalized process of turning information into ingrained habits. In those distinctive years of early childhood, children are molding their personalities – the traits that are associated with them then will become the core of the person that they will become. By definition, cognitive development is the construction of thought processes, including remembering, problem solving, and decision-making, from childhood through adolescence to adulthood. How did you learn to tie your shoes? When did you first learn your ABC's?

*"Important educational philosophers assert that education is about building habits, or a set of routinized — almost intuitive — behaviors and thoughts. As Lee Shulman, President Emeritus of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, explains: to inculcate a person into a particular field of study or practice, the individual must learn the "habits of mind, habits of hand, and habits of heart" ("Signature Pedagogies in the Professions," Daedalus, Summer 2005). That is, good education helps students to learn content (mind), skills (hand) and values (heart).*

*We in the Jewish educational world need to think along these lines: Any endeavor that is meant to engage and educate must create habits. It cannot merely be a moment or even ten days of inspiration. For every great time-limited program we run, there needs to be a before and an after. A day or week of service is important, and can be inspirational to its participants. But imagine if we were serious about getting people in the habit of doing service, for example, of being kind to others. We likely wouldn't design an experience in a far-away place where doing good would be relegated. Instead, we would design ongoing programs in which people could participate locally, every month or every week, and thus provide the opportunity for doing good to become a natural day-to-day habit."*

This quote was taken from an article I recently read entitled "Birthing Jewish Habits" by Abi Douber Sterne, Vice President for Global Jewish Experience at Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life. Although the main thrust of the article deals with college students and the power of the Birthright Israel Trip,

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## **Sisterhood News**

By Rayna Ravitz, Sisterhood President

In February, 22 of us went to see "Singin' in the Rain" at the Leshner Center and in March another large group went to the International Jewish film Festival for "Paris Match." These were two fun events. I'm writing this before the Women's Se-der, but I'm anticipating all the women who attend will have a wonderful afternoon!

### **Upcoming Events:**

Wednesday, April 10 – Book Sisters 6:30 pm

"In the Garden of Beasts: Love, Terror, an American Family in Hitler's Berlin" by Erik Larson. Pot luck dairy dinner.

Tuesday, June 11 – Book Sisters 7:00 pm

"Two Among The Righteous Few" by Marty Brounstein. The author will be in attendance - everyone is invited.

Book Choices for later in the year:

"Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail" by Cheryl Strayed

You can reach me at [raynaravitz@gmail.com](mailto:raynaravitz@gmail.com).

Friends,

Thank you so much for making my three months with you at B'nai Tikvah so meaningful.

I enjoyed meeting you and working with you. Thanks for your warm words of welcome and for your expressions of gratitude.

I am now the Seventh grade Sunday school teacher so my duties and responsibilities continue in the Temple community.

Rabbi Asher returns and will continue to guide your congregational worship experiences and activities. I am glad he chose me to serve you. I appreciate his confidence in me. And, I benefited from the opportunity and the privilege.

Thanks to all.

*Rabbi Jerry Levy*

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## **Social Action Committee**

Thanks to Phil Hankin for initiating and organizing Mitzvah Day where religious school families were involved in a variety of helpful activities. Next year, we hope to make this a congregation-wide opportunity over Purim and will start planning for it in the fall.

### **Upcoming**

This year's Social Action Shabbat is April 19<sup>th</sup> with a guest speaker discussing the topic of immigration issues in Contra Costa County and the broader Bay Area. Educational information will be presented on various aspects of immigration policy and how its implementation affects families in our county. Information will also be provided by the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) about Jewish perspectives on immigration. This year promises to be an important year for immigration policy at the national, state and local level. Come and find out how you can learn more about what actions you can take to become involved with this critical policy issue.

### **Around our Community**

Making summer plans yet for your family? Be sure to add in the **Relay of Life** which will be Saturday, July 27<sup>th</sup> - Sunday, July 28<sup>th</sup>. Come be a part of Team Tikvah, walk laps at the Relay, and help to raise money for the American Cancer Society. You can pick any part of the 24-hour Relay that works for you and your family. More details to follow.....

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## **Spring is Here and Time for Spring Cleaning to Help Others!**



April 14<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup>

Men's and Women's clothing needs to be cleaned and on hangers. Shoes, purses and accessories are also needed.

Adult clothing will be donated to Wardrobe for Opportunity.

Children's clothing also wanted! Must be laundered and bagged.

Children's clothing will be donated to Vestia

(Volunteer Emergency Services Team in Action - [www.vestiainc.org](http://www.vestiainc.org).)

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## Contributions

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### GENERAL FUND

In memory of Jeanette Vine  
In memory of Malcolm Vineberg, III  
*Joni and Mal Vineberg*  
In memory of Amelia Lewis  
*Sue and John Lewis*  
In memory of Allan Green  
*Lisa and John McLaurin*  
In memory of Stella Malkova  
In memory of Ada Yetskaya  
*Rakhil and Naum Sadetskiy*  
In memory of Bella Garb  
*Frances Dobin*  
In memory of Alice Levich  
*Trish and Jared Goldin*  
In memory of Louis Fried  
*Amy Klein*  
In memory of Alice Chakoff  
In memory of Ed Chakoff  
*Jackie Chakoff*  
In memory of Marian Kaplan  
*Kelly and Aaron Kaplan*  
In memory of Mimi McCullough Tullis  
*Christine and Murray Sheldon*  
In memory of Morris Port  
In memory of Herbert Leib  
*Myrna Leib*  
In memory of Donald Iselin  
*Deanna Broom*  
In memory of Shirley Maslin  
*Marcia and Harvey Maslin*  
In memory of Seymour Appleby  
*Hanna and Fred Carter*  
In memory of Willa Kaye  
*Bob Kaye*

### RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

In memory of Donald Roy  
*Andrea and Harold Wolf*

### GENERAL FUND FOR CANTOR'S MUSICAL PROGRAMS

In memory of Kathryn Bemesderfer  
In memory of David Ziegler  
*Cookie Svingos*  
In memory of Kathryn Bemesderfer  
*Yonina and Barry Bushell*  
*Ruth and Larry Goldenberg*  
In memory of Louis Fried  
*The Fried Family*  
In memory of Milton Leon  
*Sandra Leon*  
In memory of Stanley Levyn  
*Terri and Brent Waterman*

### STEPHAN JASPAN RELIGIOUS SCHOOL FUND

In memory of David Fischer  
*Michael Fischer*

### ABRAHAM NIVER SCHOLARSHIP FUND

In memory of Nathan Bronstone  
In memory of Isaac Bronstone  
*Madeline and Trace Bronstone*  
In honor of Judy and David Niver's Wedding Anniversary  
*Pat and Chuck Eisner*

### SOCIAL ACTION FUND

In memory of Betty Shampanier  
*Mona Epstein and Stephen Raucher*  
In memory of Robert Salusky  
In memory of Mary Kimball Sutherland  
*Monica Salusky and John Sutherland*

### CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

In memory of Robert Kemna  
In memory of Ida Brill  
In memory of Ann Dienst  
*Gloria Kemna*

### ***Shalom Connection***

Mazel Tov to:

Karen Ireland on the birth of granddaughter,  
Reagan Purser

Condolences to:

Lauren Goldberg and family on the loss of her  
grandmother, Frances Belle Zenner  
Debra Landis and family on the loss of her mother,  
Mary Weiss  
Julie Stern and family on the loss of her mother,  
Carol Stebens



Working at Walnut Creek Open Space on Mitzvah Day



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## Turn It, Turn It...

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the premise applies to what I am trying to accomplish here at CBT. The goal of the Religious School at CBT is to ingrain life-lasting Jewish habits and competencies. Over the past 3 years I have been the director of the program, I believe we have been doing a good job of this. During the Town Hall Meeting on Parent's Day in February, the following list was created by those in attendance when asked to describe the Religious School to others who are not members of CBT:

*Camp Like*  
*Engaging*  
*Warm and Welcoming*  
*Feeling of Community*  
*Good Teachers*  
*Young, Awake, Alive, High Energy*  
*Fun with a Purpose*  
*Children enjoying Hebrew*  
*Prep for Jewish Life*  
*Ruach*  
*Beautiful Setting*  
*Inclusive*

From this list, though, is there anything that indicates that the students have learned to ingrain any Jewish habits?

This is the next step in the maturation of the school. My main focus over the next 2 years (and beyond), now that a distinctive atmosphere has been created, is to have students and parents repeat the mantra: "All I Really Need To Know About Being Jewish I Learned at CBT's Religious School!"

From now through the summer, plans will be made to revamp how the school engages student learning. Small parent focus groups are being formed to hash out ideas, and the teaching staff and I are engaging in professional development meeting aimed at looking at how we do business as educators. Once these meetings take place, and all the info is taken back to the Education Committee for review, we will begin the process of laying the foundation for "the next big thing" in Jewish Education. Stay tuned!!

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## Reflections...

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vited people to share memories and to speak about him, but only if it would help her to begin to heal. People did just that, sharing funny stories and offering her wisdom and strength for her days and years ahead. I then asked her to blow out her candle so that we could move outside for the rest of the ritual. What happened next was quite amazing. She leaned down to blow out the candle, but no matter how hard she blew, the candle would not go out. She blew once, twice, three times, laughing. Someone mentioned how stubborn her father had been. She then took a final, huge breath and blew out the candle successfully. I know I was not alone in feeling relief and even a little bit of joy at that moment.

We finished the ritual by planting a beautiful maple tree in her front yard, where people were invited to shovel some dirt around the tree's roots. This action was almost like a mirror image of the graveside service, where everyone had shoveled dirt onto her father's coffin. This time, the dirt we put into the ground was to sustain life. We said kaddish, and then, as a group, we took a walk around her block to say goodbye to her father.

I walked behind her and watched her walking in a line with her friends, laughing. As we passed a steep street that turned off of hers, she looked up and said, "I've never walked up that street in my life. I want to walk up that hill." So we all marched up the hill, until we reached a spectacular view of Lafayette below us. Someone mentioned that her father would never have walked up that hill. I thought to myself, that's exactly right. In her walk to say goodbye to him, she did something challenging for herself, something that he would not have done. I felt certain, right then, that she was going to be OK.

I went home after that experience feeling so grateful for Judaism. We have blessings and rituals for so many occasions, and for the ones that don't exist, we can create them and truly affect change in the world. My wish for this congregation is for all of us to get the opportunity to experience as many transformative rituals as we can. They restore faith in humanity and in our awesome ability to support and comfort one another.

**Join B'nai Tikvah's Literacy Project and Become a Reading Tutor for just one hour a week.**

Monday, April 8, 2013 1-4 pm

Share the joy of reading with a child! Join the Jewish Coalition for Literacy (JCL), in partnership with Congregation B'nai Tikvah, as a volunteer reading tutor.

Through The Jewish Coalition for Literacy (JCL), spend the school year paired with a K-3 grade student developing a strong relationship while providing the confidence and the strategies that will enable the student to become a successful reader.

JCL engages our volunteers in tikkun olam, healing the world, and welcomes all members of the community—students, seniors, parents and professionals—to participate in the lives of at-risk children. JCL is an independently funded joint project of the Jewish Community Relations Council and the Jewish Community Federation, managed by JCRC.

In just one hour a week, you can help a student learn to love reading. For more information and to register, please visit the JCL website at [www.jclread.org](http://www.jclread.org), or contact Judy Pam-Bycel at [jpbysel@jcrcc.org](mailto:jpbysel@jcrcc.org).

As we write this article, a new Pope has been selected and everyone can now settle down to what, for us, will be the more personal clergy selection process of this year.

We have successfully completed a series of focus groups – one with our staff and three with CBT members – aimed at addressing some of the most significant questions that are in the application we will be submitting to the Rabbinical Placement Commission. This group helps congregations and rabbis successfully navigate the application and recruitment process.

Although not initially sure what they were getting themselves into, participants seem to have had a fun experience and felt the information produced was very insightful. As you may recall the three questions asked were:

What are the top three qualities you are looking for in a new Rabbi?

What should be the top three most important priorities for our new rabbi?

What is the single most important thing you would want a new Rabbi to know about this congregation?

Close to 100 members attended the focus groups overall. The participants were separated out into smaller facilitated units of 5 to 7 people primarily based on the length of time they were congregants. The separation was premised on how members joining CBT at similar times will have shared experiences. On many things there was agreement, both across the groups and across the multiple focus groups. We viewed that with some relief, but without tremendous surprise. CBT is a diverse congregation in many ways but that also means there is less rigidity in terms of the congregation and its congregants.

Our thanks to Bob Cantor, Glenn Gould, Tina Guterman, Dan Lapporte, Bruce Meyers, John Rubinfeld, Bob Stern, Lisa Wenger, Mary Ann and Harry Wittenberg and Todd Young for their tremendous help in facilitating the "break-out" groups at the focus sessions. Could not have done it without their diligent and capable assistance.

Going forward, there are a number of other elements that need to be discussed as we prepare our application. We will look to the Board and the soon-to-be-selected Search Committee to help us with this.

In mid-March, we had a conference call with the chair of the Placement Commission of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and it was both encouraging and a bit overwhelming. We are happy to report that the national leadership considers CBT to be one of the most attractive pulpits becoming available. We are not surprised, knowing our congregation. Our location is also a major attraction (translation – no snow). We were a bit overwhelmed by estimates of how many potential candidates we may have to review.

This spring, summer and fall are going to be very busy for the Search Committee, particularly if predictions of likely interest prove true. We are committed to taking the steps to make our search as comprehensive and thoughtful as we can. While much of the work of the search, both for the Search Committee and Board, will necessarily be strictly confidential until the latest stages, we will endeavor to apprise you of how it is progressing.

We look forward to discussing this process with you, whether through vehicles such as Tikvah Talk or in person. Please let us know if you have any questions, thoughts or suggestions. We have set up an e-mail account specifically to direct comments and questions about the search: [cbtrabbisearch@gmail.com](mailto:cbtrabbisearch@gmail.com). We are also happy to speak with you individually, whether in person, by phone or via our personal e-mails, available at the CBT member's web site. You will also find us around CBT quite a bit, enjoying the many benefits of being part of the B'nai Tikvah community.



B'nai Tikvah Team, "There's No Crying in Trivia," won 1<sup>st</sup> place once again (4 of the past 6 years) at Temple Isaiah's recent Trivia Night.

We had a really big March at Contra Costa Midrasha! Our March 2<sup>nd</sup> fundraiser was very successful with great attendance and participation from our community. A hearty thank you to everyone in the B'nai Tikvah community who contributed to its success. Thank you!

On March 15<sup>th</sup> we had a lovely Kabbalat Shabbat dinner with the 7<sup>th</sup> grade teens and their parents. All designed to give the 7<sup>th</sup> grade teens and parents a taste of Midrasha, CCM and B'nai Tikvah teens, Megan Bristow, Hallie Unger, Louis Polcin, Nieves Winslow, Matan Kiesler, Dani Kiesler and Zach Wiesenthal led the 7<sup>th</sup> graders in games and Havdalah candle making, while I met with parents. The highlight of the evening happened during services when 10<sup>th</sup> graders Dani Kiesler and Maddy Shedd gave the evening's D'var Torah about their experiences at Midrasha.

Speaking of getting a taste of Midrasha, the highlight of April will happen on the 24<sup>th</sup>, our annual 7<sup>th</sup> grade Open House! Any and all 7<sup>th</sup> grade teens and their parents are invited that evening to try out Midrasha, as it really happens. The evening starts with pizza dinner at 6:30 pm and includes a chance for 7<sup>th</sup> graders to try out Midrasha electives, meet other teens, eat donuts and more! For parents, we host a separate information and schmooze session.

The month of April ends with our final retreat of the year at Camp Newman.

For information about our annual Open House, to RSVP for the final retreat or to early register for 2013-14, visit our website at [www.ccmidrasha.com](http://www.ccmidrasha.com), or call 924-944-4701.

Happy Spring!

### Do you know someone who has been thinking about joining CBT?

Please invite them to JOIN YOU at our Prospective Member 'Pizza' Dinner and Family Shabbat service  
Friday, May 3 at 5:30 p.m.

Introduce your guests to Rabbi Asher, Cantor Chabon, Phil Hankin, and other members to learn more about the wonderful community here at CBT.

We will have a Family Shabbat service following dinner at 6:30 during which the Kindergarten and First Grade Religious School students will be participating.

Then schmooze some more at the oneg following services!

Please RSVP for dinner by Monday, April 29 by contacting Judy Blum at [office@tikvah.org](mailto:office@tikvah.org) or 925-933-5397.

Members can sign up through our website or send a check to the Temple Office. \$10 adults/\$5 children.

The pizza is on us. The inviting is up to you!

The Community-wide Commemoration in Contra Costa for

## YOM HASHOAH V'HAGEVURAH

Before the Light Went Out  
SONGS AND REFLECTIONS  
ON JEWISH LIFE IN PRE-WWII EUROPE



**Guest Singer: Anthony Mordechai Tzvi Russell**  
Fresh from the world of opera, Anthony Russell will perform songs from the Yiddish repertoire of pre-WWII composers.

**SUNDAY, APRIL 7, 2013  
4:00 PM**

**Temple Isaiah, 945 Risa Road, Lafayette**

Admission is free  
For more information: 510.318.6453

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The Men of CBT had a great March. We hosted Rabbi Jhos Singer once again for a fabulous lecture on Kaballah. On April 21<sup>st</sup> we'll have our Schmeer and Schmooze in the library with an "open mic" meaning any topic is acceptable to bring for discussion. Thanks to all the guys who helped with the Night on Broadway also!

And you won't want to miss our May meeting, Sunday, May 5, where we are off to Napa for a day of wine tasting at two kosher wineries. The Men will meet at CBT at 9:00am. We will then car pool up Hagafan Cellars in Napa for a private tour and wine tasting. Some of us will put a picnic lunch together and probably eat lunch on their grounds. Then we will take a drive to B.R. Cohen Winery to partake in yet another tour and tasting. After a little schmoozing, we will head back to the Temple. If you're interested in joining us, RSVP to Bob Grossman at grossman0306@att.net.

In the spirit of the early Men of CBT group meetings when we told a joke or two, and for our friends of Irish descent in honor of St. Paddy's Day, here is a Jewish limerick, taken from an old joke.

"There was a very old man from Mad River,  
Who, from his death bed craved his wife's chopped liver,  
He called out to his wife  
Who replied 'not on your life,'  
I'm saving it all for your shiva."

On Mitzvah Day, one of the projects was making Shalach Manos baskets for residents at Reutlinger.



Of all the Past Presidents, I have a special appreciation of Rick. As you know, one conversation can have a dramatic change in your life. Well, it happened to me. In 2008, I was a member like some of you (attended services, fundraisers, etc., but not actively involved). Rick asked me to chair the Religious School Committee. My first reaction was "Really. Me?" But after contemplating his request, I decided to take on the role. Three years later, I accepted the nomination to be President. I can honestly say if Rick hadn't "made me an offer I couldn't refuse," I would not be known as the Nudge-a-rator. For that, I'll always be grateful to Rick for having the confidence in me. Unfortunately, Rick is swamped this time of year, so his story is not being told here.

My predecessor, Lisa Wenger, was a President who embodied the traits many of us respect and admire: well-spoken, humble, generous, and most importantly, compassionate. She possesses pretty much core values of our community. As I look back when I transitioned to my current role, I am so grateful for Lisa's ongoing support and input. She is truly one of the most respected members we have. We are extremely fortunate for all of her contributions and our temple is much better for that. Her heartfelt High Holyday speeches brought us closer as a community and her presence at many services and fundraisers set a great example.

### **Meet Lisa Wenger**



In the spring of 2005, Marc Usatin called the Wenger household to see if either my husband, Howard, or I would be interested in joining the General Board. I told him that Howard would be the more competent board member, but I would be the more available one. So, despite feeling completely unqualified to contribute to a temple board, I joined at the beginning of Marc Berger's term in July, 2005. My first assignment was to work on publicity. I tried, but I was such a fish out of water in that capacity that I seriously considered leaving the General Board within the first year. About that time, however, I switched over to Social Action, and that made all the difference. Meanwhile, our family loved going to services, my daughter enjoyed religious school, and the congregation became a bigger and bigger part of our lives.

Somehow my increasing involvement led to being president, something I hadn't even imagined doing until a few months before it happened. I was very fortunate that Phil Weismehl and Rayna Ravitz agreed to rejoin the Executive Board so that the temple wouldn't be in the hands of a complete amateur! I didn't have any grand visions for my presidency; I simply wanted to be appropriately responsive to whatever came up. The mortgage was (as always) bearing down on us, but with the great help of Todd Goldman, Bob Miller, and a group of congregant lenders, CBT was able to refinance in time and at a good rate. Other Board accomplishments during my term included re-signing

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## The Committees of Congregation B'nai Tikvah

### SPOTLIGHT ON MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

**The Membership Committee** actively seeks and supports new members. The committee is responsible for coordinating events that provide prospective members an opportunity to learn about our temple. The committee welcomes new members into our community and helps to facilitate their active participation in our congregation as well as works on membership retention.

The Membership Committee is need of a new chairperson! Jenifer Paul, the current chair of the membership committee is stepping down from this role and into her new position as co-chair of the rabbi search committee. If you are interested in this filling this important position or know someone you want us to nudge to do it, please contact Jenifer at [jenlamkenpaul@hotmail.com](mailto:jenlamkenpaul@hotmail.com) or Idelle Lipman at [idelle.lipman@gmail.com](mailto:idelle.lipman@gmail.com).

**The Chesed Group** is made up of CBT members who help other members at their time of need with meals, transportation, errands, and sometimes just someone to talk to. **Chair: Lisa McLaurin**

**The Finance Committee** advises the Board on financial issues. It acts as the Temple's budget committee and drafts the Temple's annual budget for Board and Congregational approval. **Chair: John Rubinfeld**

**The Fund Raising Committee** hosts events to help raise critical funds for the Temple and brings together the Temple family for fun and entertainment. Members of the Fundraising Committee enjoy organizing and planning such events as the Restaurant Walk and CBT's Annual Gala. The committee is open to new ideas! **Chair: Amy Lichtenstein**

**The House Committee** ensures that our building space is inviting and well maintained for congregants and guests. If you have not already seen this committee's latest project, please stop by the amphitheater. The amphitheater got a whole new look, with a fresh coat of stain and have wonderful new concrete steps! **Chair: Alan Gould**

**The Interfaith Committee** provides programs, resources, and support that address the unique needs of interfaith families. **Chair: Glenn Gould**

**The Legacy Committee** concerns itself with securing commitments from members to remember Congregation B'nai Tikvah in their estate planning. Planed gifts ensure the continuity and strength of Congregation. **Chair: Lisa Wenger**

**Men of CBT** - The purpose of the Men of CBT is to engage male congregants, both in-faith and inter-faith alike, in building a community that enriches their experience at Congregation B'nai Tikvah. We do this by offering opportunities to learn, socialize and serve our temple. Our goal is to provide many diverse opportunities for male congregants to engage with the temple and feel like they are part of our community. **Chair: Harry Wittenberg**

**The Online Communications Committee** is responsible for the technology and content of B'nai Tikvah's website and social media presence. Assisted by Temple staff, the committee maintains and enhances our website, Facebook page and potentially other online communications. More broadly, the committee consults on other communications opportunities including on-line advertising, video content and outreach to the membership and community. This committee invites members with an interest in on-line communications to join and contribute to our group. **Chair: Dan Lapporte**

The **Ritual Committee** meets monthly to plan and discuss the upcoming holidays. Working closely with the cantor and rabbi, the committee discusses how they can assist in making services, holidays, and life events more meaningful for the members and bring the community closer together. The committee is an integral part of our congregation. Some examples of events the Ritual Committee coordinates are: Congregational Passover Seder, Apples and Honey for Rosh Hashanah and Break-the-Fast on Yom Kippur. **Chair: Mary Ann Wittenberg**

The **Religious School Committee** provides support and assistance to the Director of Religious Education in all aspects of education

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# APRIL 2013 Nisan - Iyar 5773

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>1</b> (Office closed) PASSOVER - Last Day	<b>2</b> NO Religious School Jewish Meditation, A Taste of Torah 10:00 am - 11:00 am	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> Judaism & Psychology: The Subtle Wisdom of our Holiday & Life Cycle Rituals 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm	<b>5</b> K-3 Pot Luck Dinner 5:30 pm Family Shabbat Service - 2nd & 3rd grade participating "Refuat Hanefesh" (A Healing of Spirit) 6:30 pm	<b>6</b> *Shemini Torah Study (Lay Led) 9:00 am Shabbat Service - Bar Mitzvah of Jeremy Kaplan 10:00 am
<b>7</b> Religious School Hebrew Boot Camp III 12:15 pm - 1:15 pm YOM HASHOAH Community event @ Isaiah 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm	<b>8</b> Jewish Coalition for Literacy 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm Executive Board Meeting 6:00 pm Ritual Committee Meeting 7:30 pm	<b>9</b> Jewish Meditation, A Taste of Torah 10:00 am - 11:00 am Religious School 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm	<b>10</b> Rosh Chodesh - Iyyar	<b>11</b> Judaism & Psychology: The Subtle Wisdom of our Holiday & Life Cycle Rituals 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm	<b>12</b> Shabbat Service 6:30 pm	<b>13</b> *Tazria/Metzora Kids Congregation 9:00 am Torah Study (Lay Led) 9:00 am Shabbat Service - 4th grade participating w/Israel theme 10:00 am
<b>14</b> Religious School Hebrew Boot Camp III 12:15 pm - 1:15 pm	<b>15</b> General Board Meeting 6:30 pm	<b>16</b> YOM HAATZMA'UT Jewish Meditation, A Taste of Torah 10:00 am - 11:00 am Religious School 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm	<b>17</b> Education Committee Meeting 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm	<b>18</b> Judaism & Psychology: The Subtle Wisdom of our Holiday & Life Cycle Rituals 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm	<b>19</b> SHIR JOY - Social Action Guest Speaker 7:30 pm	<b>20</b> *Aharei Mot/Kedoshim Torah Study (Lay Led) 9:00 am Shabbat Service - Bat Mitzvah of Jamie Rados 10:00 am
<b>21</b> Religious School Schmear and Schmooze w/Men of CBT 10:00 am Hebrew Boot Camp III 12:15 pm - 1:15 pm	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> Jewish Meditation, A Taste of Torah 10:00 am - 11:00 am Religious School 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> Judaism & Psychology: The Subtle Wisdom of our Holiday & Life Cycle Rituals 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm	<b>26</b> Shabbat Service 6:30 pm	<b>27</b> *Emor Torah Study (Lay Led) 9:00 am Shabbat Service - Bat Mitzvah of Rebekah Chappell 10:00 am
<b>28</b> Religious School	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> Jewish Meditation, A Taste of Torah 10:00 am - 11:00 am Religious School 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm				

## JUDAISM AND PSYCHOLOGY: THE SUBTLE WISDOM OF OUR HOLIDAY & LIFE CYCLE RITUALS

JOIN RABBI ASHER FOR THIS SERIES

THURSDAY EVENINGS, APRIL 4 – MAY 23, 2013

7 – 8:30 PM

\$36 TUITION

SIGN UP ON LINE OR PLEASE SEND A CHECK TO THE TEMPLE OFFICE.

# MAY 2013 Iyar - Sivan 5773

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 Judaism & Psychology: The Subtle Wisdom of our Holiday & Life Cycle Rituals 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm	3 Shabbat "Pizza" Dinner 5:30 pm Family Shabbat Service - K/Grade 1 participating. Prospective Members invited. "Refuat Hanefesh" (A Healing of Spirit) 6:30 pm	4 *Behar/Behukkotai Torah Study (Lay Led) 9:00 am Shabbat Service - Bar Mitzvah of Matthew Friedler 10:00 am
5 Religious School Men of CBT - Kosher Winery Tour 9:00 am	6 Ritual Committee Meeting 7:30 pm	7 Jewish Meditation, A Taste of Torah 10:00 am - 11:00 am Religious School 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm	8	9 Rosh Chodesh - Sivan Judaism & Psychology: The Subtle Wisdom of our Holiday & Life Cycle Rituals 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm	10 Shabbat Service 6:30 pm	11 *Bemidbar Kids Congregation 9:00 am Torah Study (Lay Led) 9:00 am Shabbat Service - Bat Mitzvah of Hannah Shepard 10:00 am
12 Religious School	13 Executive Board Meeting 6:00 pm	14 Jewish Meditation, A Taste of Torah 10:00 am - 11:00 am Religious School - Last midweek session 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm	15 (Office closed) SHAVUOT	16 Judaism & Psychology: The Subtle Wisdom of our Holiday & Life Cycle Rituals 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm	17 SHIR JOY and 7th Grade Graduation 7:30 pm	18 *Naso Torah Study (Lay Led) 9:00 am Shabbat Service - Bat Mitzvah of Sima Shur 10:00 am
19 Religious School - Last Day Annual Meeting 10:00 am Choral Event 4:00 pm	20	21 Jewish Meditation, A Taste of Torah 10:00 am - 11:00 am	22 Midrasha Graduation	23 Judaism & Psychology: The Subtle Wisdom of our Holiday & Life Cycle Rituals 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm	24 Shabbat Service 6:30 pm	25 *Behaalotkha Torah Study (Lay Led) 9:00 am Shabbat Service - Bar Mitzvah of Shane Wilk 10:00 am
26	27 (Office closed) MEMORIAL DAY	28 Jewish Meditation, A Taste of Torah 10:00 am - 11:00 am	29	30	31 Shabbat Service 6:30 pm	

Please join us for our  
Annual Meeting

Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup>  
10 am  
CBT Amphitheatre

## Kids Congregation Saturday, April 13 & May 11 at 9 am

Please join Cantor Chabon for our  
Kids Congregation service.  
Come see the Torah up close.  
Enjoy singing and a story in a small setting.  
All ages welcome - from babies on up!  
The service will be followed by a small neg.



## Committees .....

(continued from page 10)

and social functions relating to the Religious School. The committee also reviews and makes recommendations on the school budget helps to prepare the budget. **Chair: Todd Young**

**Sisterhood** is a service and social organization that promotes camaraderie among women of the Congregation and provides support to B'nai Tikvah and the Jewish Community. The Shalom Connection provides support to congregants in their time of need and acknowledges milestones in their lives. Through its membership dues, Sisterhood continues to present the Congregation with sorely needed goods, items, equipment, and religious adornments. To promote fellowship among female congregants, Sisterhood annually sponsors a Membership Tea. Programs are also held throughout the year which are educational, spiritual, and charitable in nature. Some of last year's programs included: Book Sisters, Sisterhood Shabbat, Chanukah Party making No-Sew blankets, and group dinners following group attendance at the Jewish Film Festival as well as at a play at The Leshner Center. **Chair: Rayna Ravitz**

The **Social Action Committee** participates in a wide variety of projects providing service to those in need and working toward social justice. Some examples of project the committee participates in are: Food Drives for Contra Costa Food Bank, Providing meals for Shelter, Inc. and Winter Nights, providing gifts to families in need through Oakland's Children's Hospital, donating through various clothes drives, and participating in Relay for Life (American Cancer Society). **Chair: Tina Guterman**

**Are you looking to get involved? All of the committees mentioned above are always ready to accept more volunteers! Do you have an idea for a program you want to see happen at B'nai Tikvah? Please contact Idelle Lipman our volunteer coordinator at [idelle.lipman@gmail.com](mailto:idelle.lipman@gmail.com).**



5<sup>th</sup> graders at the Jewish Film Festival one Sunday morning

## President....

(continued from page 9)

Cantor Chabon to a long extension and starting the Create a Jewish Legacy program. My tenure on the Board is ending in a few months, about eight years after Marc's phone call. Although I am looking forward to being "just" a congregant again, I will forever feel honored to have worked with Rabbi Asher, Cantor Chabon, and Judy Blum, and to have been given the opportunity to serve the synagogue.

### B'nai Tikvah Members (ages 18 - 50+) wanted for Men's Adult Softball!



**What:** Play on B'nai Tikvah adult softball team in the Diablo Valley Tzedakah Softball league

**When:** Sunday Mornings 8:00 – 11:30.

League runs March 31<sup>st</sup> through July 28<sup>th</sup>, 12 regular season games plus up 1 - 2 play off games

**Where:** Heather Farms, Walnut Creek [on Ygnacio Valley Rd. east of John Muir Hospital]

**Who: Members [and their children] 18 – 50+ years old**  
With any level of skill/experience [play averages around "D-E" level]

**Cost:** \$100 per player

**How to sign up & questions:** Contact Jim Blachman  
(510) 207-0990, [jim\\_blachman@yahoo.com](mailto:jim_blachman@yahoo.com)  
6100 Swainland Rd., Oakland, CA 94611

Team rosters are forming.  
We need to hear from you NOW if  
you're interested in playing.

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

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Permit No. 71  
Walnut Creek, CA

**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

**For membership information, please contact the Temple Office.**

**New Meditation Group at B'nai Tikvah**

True or False:

- 1) Meditation is a skill acquired by only a few gifted individuals – and after much training.
- 2) Meditation is a new practice for Jewish people.
- 3) Meditation has been found to be of great help in all stress related illness.

Answers:

- 1) False – Meditation is not at all difficult to accomplish.
- 2) False – Meditation has been practiced by Jewish people for about 3000 years.
- 3) True – Though the health aspects of meditation were not something known to our ancient prophets, perhaps it is one reason they lived for so many years.

You are invited to join our new meditation group meeting each Tuesday morning from 10 to 11 am in the CBT library beginning April 2<sup>nd</sup>.

As in our prior meditation workshops, everyone is welcome, those having past experience with meditation and those who have never had that experience.

We will begin each session focusing on the Torah portion of the week, a Taste of Torah.

There is no charge for this new CBT activity, but an email to [philip.paris@ymail.com](mailto:philip.paris@ymail.com) indicating your interest in attending will be appreciated.