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# Tikvah Talk

Vol. 32 Iss. 3

Congregation B'nai Tikvah Walnut Creek, CA

November 2012

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## From Where I Stand

By Rabbi Raphael Asher



November 9 is more noted today in Europe as the date of the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989. However, that same date in 1938 will always be remembered both in Jewish and German history as “Kristallnacht,” “The Night of Broken Glass,” on which a pre-war pogrom destroyed some 200 synagogues and terrorized the Jewish populations in Germany and Austria.

This year’s anniversary falls on Shabbat and a commemoration will be included in our Friday evening service. On behalf of the Men of CBT I have invited a representative of the German Consulate, Bernhard Abels, to speak to us of the New Germany and its acute awareness of the sins of the Third Reich.

As we enter a decade of the virtual absence of adult eyewitnesses to the Holocaust from both the perpetrators’ and the victims’ perspective, it has served Germany well to wrestle openly with its legacy and to welcome a new Jewish community from the former Soviet Union. It can serve us well as American Jews to hear the voices of Germans today in order to gauge the potential of human and national repentance.

This has been an ongoing topic of exploration in my family and in my rabbinate, and I am grateful to the Men of CBT for making it the focus of their annual Shabbat.

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## Reflections...

By Cantor Jennie Chabon



*Cantor Chabon’s Yom Kippur Drash 5773*

Good Yom Tov.

Most of you know that I gave birth eight months ago to a beautiful baby boy, Judah Solomon. Eight days after he was born, we brought him into the covenant at his bris. It probably comes as no surprise to you that we had several clergy who helped to lead the ritual, Rabbi Asher among them, as well as my dear friend Julie.

Because we are both very busy, Julie and I were not able to see each other for many weeks after Judah’s bris. We kept trying, but we could not make our lives connect. And then, her father died. It was not unexpected, but it still felt sudden, so much so that I hardly knew that he was sick before I got the call that he was gone. She asked me to lead a shiva minyan at her mom’s house for her dad. So, three months after Judah’s bris, I finally saw her again, this time, in mourning.

At the minyan, she talked about her last night with her father, and how she stayed up with him all night, counting the seconds and minutes between his breaths. She understood, for the first time in a real and deep way, how very connected life and death are to each other. Rather than counting the minutes between contractions as she had, 16 years before, on the eve of her daughter’s birth, she found herself counting breath after breath, wondering which one would be the last. She said it even felt like birth in a strange way, or like birth’s mirror image.

After he died, she, her husband and her three siblings performed *tahara* for her father, lovingly washing and preparing his body for burial in complete silence, except for the chanting of psalms in the background. Again, she could not help seeing the parallels between death and birth. She had been quite afraid to perform this sacred ritual before the time came, but once it started, she said it felt like washing a baby.

I share this story with you because today is all about seeing how very thin the veils are between life and death. It’s not about suffering through the fast and punishing ourselves for our sins of the past year. We do need to take a deep look at ourselves and at our

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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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Vice President	Tina Guterman
Vice President	Glenn Gould
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Mary Ann Wittenberg	Todd Young

**Upcoming B'nai Mitzvah**

*Jocelyn Schoenholz*  
*Daughter of Debbie and Michael Schoenholz*  
*Saturday, November 3*

*Jordan Levy*  
*Son of Deborah and David Levy*  
*Saturday, November 10*

*Eli Stark-Elster*  
*Son of Wendy Stark-Elster and Steve Elster*  
*Saturday, November 17*

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

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

Karen Aldridge

Erin and Andy Sacks  
*Riley 8/07/2005, Morgan 3/12/2007*

Karen Sibony and Jason Pollack  
*Simone 9/15/2004, Isaac 1/12/2007*

Kim and Ed Wies  
*Adam 3/28/2005, Sarah 4/5/2008*

**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

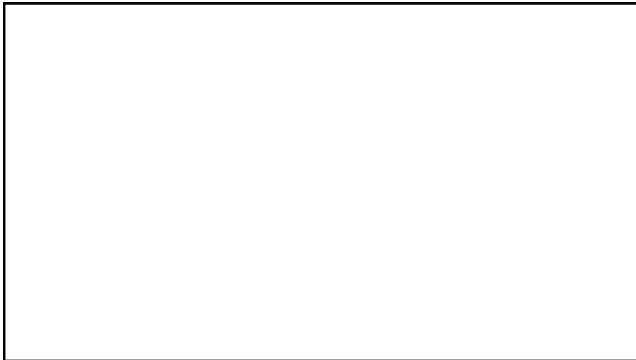


It's been a little more than a month since the "It takes a Shtetl" appeal on Yom Kippur. First I wanted to thank Rayna Ravitz and Jen Paul for their heartfelt words about their historical and personal bond with our community and our "communal" home. As for my portion of the presentation, I wanted to recap some of the key points:

Several of you have referred to me as the "Kodak" President (because I like to show pictures when I speak). Well to continue that tradition, I want to bring back two powerful pictures: the before and after of our beautiful temple.



These are, of course, only from the outside! The difference on the inside is just as remarkable!



As the "numbers guy," let's recap the highlights:

- ◆ Amount we owe on the mortgage: \$1,900,000
- ◆ Annual payments toward the mortgage: \$125,000
  
- ◆ High Holyday appeal    All contributions to pay down the principal
- ◆ 5 year pledge:            Mortgage payments & \$500,000 in principal
- ◆ \$\$ needed per year:    \$225,000 per year

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## Turn It, Turn It, Turn It Again

By Phil Hankin, Director of Education



When is education experiential education? This is the headline of an article I was reading in the most recent edition of *Kolot - Voices of Conservative/Masorti Judaism* magazine that arrived at my house a few weeks back (you can read the entire article by following the link: [http://www.uscj.org/Aboutus/Publications/CJ\\_VoicesofConservative\\_MasortiJudaism/](http://www.uscj.org/Aboutus/Publications/CJ_VoicesofConservative_MasortiJudaism/)

[TheCurrentIssue/Fall2012/](http://www.uscj.org/Aboutus/Publications/CJ_VoicesofConservative_MasortiJudaism/TheCurrentIssue/Fall2012/)

[WhenisEducationExperientialEducation.aspx](http://www.uscj.org/Aboutus/Publications/CJ_VoicesofConservative_MasortiJudaism/TheCurrentIssue/Fall2012/WhenisEducationExperientialEducation.aspx)). When you hear the words "experiential education" the first inclination is for your mind to think about education that takes place somewhere outside of the walls of the classroom. But, as the author of the article Mark Young puts it, "experiential education is much more than a place." Experiential education is about teachers/counselors/staff members guiding their students through experiences while providing opportunities to reflect on what they are experiencing. It is the two-way interactive process between educator and learner, and it is about being able to help the learners synthesize what they have learned and come to their own conclusions.

Facilitation and reflection are two key elements of the approach (not place) of experiential education. Dr. Joseph Reimer, of Brandeis University, one of a growing number of academics who have written on Jewish experiential education over the last decade, has argued that experiences do not end when an event is over, and that an experience on its own is not experiential education. It is when we reflect on our past experiences at any point afterward, even several years later, that the experience becomes experiential learning.

What I have tried to create here at CBT falls in line with what Dr. Reimer and Mark Young describes. The education one receives at CBT's Religious School focuses heavily on the experience one receives each time they enter the building. Whether it is joining together for prayer under the big oak tree in the amphitheater, singing together at our Hannukah Zimriah in December, creating a Barbie-sized Sukkah in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, reporting on a Famous Jewish person in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, attending the Fall Kallah at Camp Newman, or sitting together in small groups studying Hebrew in the hallway, the experience of being a student at CBT's Religious School is enriching and transformative. As Mark Young states in the article, "What is so fascinating today is the successful transformation of experiential education across the Jewish educational landscape. Synagogues and day schools are embracing it to complement more traditional learning. The goal is to help young Jews achieve holistic Jewish growth, that is, strong Jewish literacy as well as positive affiliation, engagement and connection to the Jewish community and Jewish life." Please take some time to experience the school for yourself.

Spend a morning attending class with your child from beginning to end. I think what you will find will be both enlightening and transformative.

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## Sisterhood News

By Rayna Ravitz, Sisterhood President

Our membership brunch was very well attended this year. We had a lot of fun and planned lots of events. Please try to join us for those events that you find interesting.

Upcoming Events:

### **Sunday, November 4 – Paper crafting with Liz Roberts**

We are hosting a StampinUp Party! Liz Roberts, CBT member and StampinUp Independent Consultant, will share some of the latest stamps, colors and accessories to create paper craft projects you will love. There will be a special Hanukkah make and take project for everyone that attends. Check out the StampinUp catalog and view projects at Liz's web site - <http://lizroberts.stampinup.net>. Contact Liz at (925) 212-5649 for more information. Judaica themed materials will be donated for Religious School use. Please join us and bring a friend!

### **Tuesday, November 12 – Dinner at Breads of India in Walnut Creek at 6:30 pm.** Ladies night out!

### **Sunday, November 18 – Trip to DeYoung Museum to see Paley Exhibit**

We'll meet at CBT to carpool at 10 am and tour the exhibit with-out a docent.

*The William Paley Exhibit: A Taste for Modernism in on loan from the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Mr. Paley was a pioneering figure in communications and the news industry, and a founder of the CBS network. The Paley collection includes paintings, sculpture and drawings from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century through the early 1970's. He collected French Post- Impressionist and Modernism works. We will see works by: Gauguin, Derain, Matisse, Toulouse-Lautrec, and Picasso among others. The cost: \$20 for adults \$17 seniors (65+)*

If we have a group of 10 or more, then we'll have a group entry fee of \$16 for all. Please RSVP to Susan Friedman - [SusanBFriedman@aol.com](mailto:SusanBFriedman@aol.com). Once we determine if we have 10, you can confirm your spot by mailing your check to Susan at 4495 Sweet Shrub Ct. Concord, Ca. 94521

\*If you would like to drive please let her know as well.

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(l-r) Mark Tornheim, Bonnie Tornheim, Marc Berger, Kathy Berger, Monica Pinsel enjoying the Restaurant Walk.

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## Social Action

By Tina Guterman, Social Action Chair

Seventy three years ago in October 1939, my father's family left Holland for what they thought would be six months, "until the war blew over." They obviously did not return in six months, or ever for that matter, but they did make a new life here in the United States in large part due to my grandfather's foresight and willingness to take a big risk in spite of being told not to.

Thinking about our own venturing out, the social action happenings in and around B'nai Tikvah that are listed below reflect opportunities for each of us to join with, and lend a hand to, communities in need that may feel quite new to us, be it contact with residents of the Winter Nights homeless shelter program, cancer survivors at the Relay for Life, or foster care families through Children's Hospital - Center for the Vulnerable Child. So, in as much as we take risks to venture outside of our own comfort zones, welcome those who may be new to our own community, help each other out right here at our own CBT shtetl (as we now fondly refer to our Jewish home thanks to John Rubinfeld), and reach out to communities in need, we hope that such experiences and encounters are enriching. On behalf of the Social Action Committee, Thank You.

Special thanks to *everyone* who volunteered to help with Winter Nights as we again partnered with Shell Ridge to provide meals to homeless families. At the time of this writing (October), Winter Nights has not occurred yet, but I will write a detailed update in the December Tikvah Talk.

### Upcoming

\*\* **Holiday Dinner Food Drive**. This year CBT will be participating, along with many other local synagogues, in an annual Holiday Dinner Drive. We are proud to support the Contra Costa Food Bank in providing healthy food and hope to families facing hunger during their holiday season, and help the food bank reach their holiday needs. Every CBT family will receive a flyer in the mail about this Holiday Food Drive. Please help us reach our goal of distributing thousands of food bags by sending in a donation of any amount that is right for you made out to the Contra Costa Food Bank in the return envelope provided in the mailing. You will be receiving your flyer in October.

\*\* **Family to Family (formerly "Adopt-A-Family")** is again happening at CBT this December through the Center for the Vulnerable Child (CVC) at Children's Hospital in Oakland. The CVC provides comprehensive clinical and social services to children and families in the foster care system who have significant need due to poverty, unstable housing, and otherserious family disruptions. As CBT members, we can help by giving needed gifts to these families for their Christmas season. How to get involved? Contact Cookie Svingos ([cookieeaz@aol.com](mailto:cookieeaz@aol.com)) to be matched with, and receive information about a specific CVC family. Or, sign up on the board in the CBT lobby.

## Contributions

### GENERAL FUND

In memory of Robert Scherman

*Joe Scherman*

In memory of Jerome Berres

*Kimberly and Brian Zagon*

In honor of the Mikesell Family

*Bonnie Falk*

### RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

In memory of Howard Kaplan

*Kelly and Aaron Kaplan*

In memory of Lisa Gewing

*Anna and Walter Gewing*

In honor of our family's Aliyah on Rosh Hashanah morning

*Susan and John Klein*

In memory of Zachary Michlen Stadt

*Leslie and Howard Sturtz*

In appreciation of the High Holydays

*The Guterman-Polcin Family*

### CANTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

In appreciation of the High Holydays

*The Guterman-Polcin Family*

### GENERAL FUND FOR CANTOR'S MUSICAL PROGRAMS

In honor of Alexandra Foxbury's first publication

*Anna and Walter Gewing*

In memory of Belle Lerner

*Nessa and Robert Wilk*

In appreciation of the High Holydays

*The Guterman-Polcin Family*

### SOCIAL ACTION FUND

In memory of Lily Maslow

*Michael Fischer*

### CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

In memory of Lynn Billy

*Wendy and Dale Billy*

In honor of Sam Rubinfeld's Bar Mitzvah

*Florence and David Miller*

In memory of Erwin Ferer

*Paula Reinman and Sandy Gross*

In honor of Matan Kiesler's Bar Mitzvah

*The Guterman-Polcin Family*



### Meditation Workshop – The Art of Jewish Prayer

Let's face it. Many of us consider prayer to be rather old fashioned. On the other hand, prayer has had an essential role in the miracle of the survival of the Jewish people. Some of that is made clear each Shabbat when our rabbi urges us to "open our lips that our mouths can begin to pray" or our cantor thrills us with the beauty of her prayful voice.

Please join us for our next meditation workshop, The Art of Jewish Prayer. We will learn something of the history and development of Jewish prayer. We will also enjoy prayer through readings from our own siddur. If you have never had the opportunity to engage in meditation you are most welcome. Come for only one or two or all four of our sessions. As recently requested, I will spend time introducing the background and the mechanics of meditation for beginners.

There is no charge for this workshop. If you plan to attend, simply email [philip.paris@ymail.com](mailto:philip.paris@ymail.com).

Dates: TUESDAY, November 6, 13, 20 and 27.

Time: 10 to 11 AM Place: CBT library

### ***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."*

**November 9 - Shabbat Service & Oneg sponsored by the Men of CBT "The New Germany and the Legacy of Kristallnacht" 6:30 pm**

The Men of CBT will participate specific readings chosen by the Rabbi. Vice Consul General Bernhard Abels from Germany will speak at the service. Join us at the Oneg to learn more about the Men of CBT.

**November 10 - Trivia Night at CBT**

The Men of CBT is buying a table at Trivia Night so come join us and let's have our own team. This is a really fun evening.

**November 11 - Livermore Bocce Ball** (it's harder than it looks!)  
10am - 1pm

We're playing bocce ball at Campo di Bocce in Livermore. The group has reserved a couple of courts so join us for fun, schmoozing, lunch.

For more information, contact Harry Wittenberg at [wittenb1@comcast.net](mailto:wittenb1@comcast.net).

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## Reflections.....

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(continued from page 1)

relationships before the day is done. We do need to FORGIVE OURSELVES for how we have hurt the people we love and ask for their forgiveness. We do need to offer our own forgiveness to the people who have harmed us.

But it's bigger and more subtle than that. It's what happens after you have those conversations. After you ask for forgiveness from God. How do you want to LIVE your life? After all, it is just one breath that separates us from this world and the world to come. One breath.

In the creation story in Genesis 2:7, it says, "The Lord God formed man from the dust of the earth. God blew into his nostrils *nishmat hayyim*, the breath of life, and man became a living being." If you are breathing, then you have the breath of God in you. Whether you believe it or not, each and every one of you is holy.

In her last moments with her father, Julie did not find herself thinking about the ways in which their relationship had been challenging or about how they had disappointed each other. She just sat with him at the end of his life, watching him breathe, and she felt a deep sense of peace in the room. The fear was gone. And in its place was love and forgiveness.

I heard a program on NPR last week about atonement. Perhaps some of you heard it as well. There were three clergy on the panel speaking about atonement in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. All three spoke beautifully on the subject, but there was something in particular that the imam said that I have not been able to stop thinking about. He brought up the idea of SELF-forgiveness as being such a critical step in the process of atonement. He said, "One of the things that separates humans from other animals is that we punish ourselves over and over again for the same harms or sins or crimes." Life is messy and complicated and we make lots of mistakes, and it does NO GOOD to keep beating ourselves up for something over and over again. We must learn to forgive ourselves in order for atonement and *teshuvah* to be possible.

As we move into the unetaneh tokef, I would like you to consider that this day is *supposed* to make you feel deep, difficult things. It is supposed to bring up the big questions, so that you can begin the New Year with renewed honesty in your relationship to yourself, to your friends and family, and to God. Honesty is scary, and we are masterful at hiding from our hearts. But today is most decidedly not about hiding. It is about imagining that you are at the end of your life, taking your last *nishmat hayyim*, your final breath. How do you want to feel about yourself at that moment, about the people who surround you? If we all do the work now, while we are very much alive, then we will hopefully find what Julie did in the end with her father: forgiveness, love and peace.

### **High Holyday Thank Yous!**

Our Ritual Committee would like to recognize all the volunteers who helped to make the High Holiday Services such a success. Thank you to those who donated food (and cut up all the bagels!), to our movers, set up and clean up crews, to our ushers, choir members and our clergy.

Special thanks to our Sukkah builders under the direction of Steve Rabinowitz.

Susan Friedman has coordinated our Sukkah decorating for many years! Join us in thanking her along with Laurie Rabinowitz, Idelle Lipman, Janet Brandess, Suzanne and Tony Restuch and Brenda Goodrich. Thanks also to Irene Korn, Barbara Almy and Patty Marcus who supplied many extras that made our Sukkah so wonderful this year and lastly to the Religious School Students who did an amazing job under the direction of their teachers.

We could not have done it without all of you!

Do you build your own Sukkah? Next year we'd love to see your pictures!

### **High Holyday Food Drive**

THANK YOU to all those who participated in our annual High Holyday Food Drive this year!

Your generosity provided the *Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano* with 1,694 pounds of nonperishable food that will help feed low income individuals and families in our region. The Food Bank is always looking for people to help sort and pack food in their Concord and Fairfield warehouses, and their Family Volunteer Days can be a great opportunity for the whole family to participate.

For more information go to [www.foodbankccs.org](http://www.foodbankccs.org).



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## ***President....***

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First, I want to thank all of you who have already contributed to “paying down the principal” appeal and/or committed to the “It takes a Shtetl” five year commitment. At the time of this article we generated \$57,050 in “pay down the mortgage” appeal. What’s so encouraging is that we’ve seen a big lift from members who haven’t made pledges in the past. It sends a strong message (at least to me) that the “It takes a Shtetl” drive truly is that!

As for the five-year pledge, we are off to a good start but we’ll need more commitments from the shtetl. We have almost 350 families and growing. This is attainable! We can do this! Some of you may feel that you don’t have any extra money to make a long term pledge. The misnomer can be the pledge has to be in the thousands. Let me make this clear, we would all be grateful if every one of us could make pledges at that level, but we know that’s not going to occur. However, every dollar counts and we all need to strongly consider a long term contribution to pay down this obligation. If you’re ready to make a pledge, I’m extremely appreciative. If you would prefer to weigh your options with me or a board member, please let Judy know and we can set up a time to get together. I’m asking you to look within yourselves and strongly consider making a pledge for our future, our second home, and most importantly our shtetl.

Speaking of successful fundraisers, let’s talk about the Restaurant Walk. What an incredible response! For the first time ever, we sold out a week ahead of time! We even sold a few books twice thanks to some generous people who bought books, realized they weren’t able to attend, and turned them back in. Thanks again to our first term board member, Amy Lichtenstein (who had to be out of town on a business trip and couldn’t even be at the Walk) and all the others who helped solicit the restaurants and sold the books! Early returns show a record setting amount.

When I introduced our Past-Presidents during my Rosh Hashanah presentation, I didn’t have time to detail all their accomplishments. However, I believe it’s important for everyone to learn a little more about who they are so we can have a better appreciation of their impact on our community. Therefore, in the coming months, we’ll be profiling them in order. Which means Marc Usatin and Barry Slavin (our first and second Presidents) will begin this series.

All newly formed communities need a leader, a visionary, and ours was Marc. I’m sure many of you have read his account (click on the “History of CBT” link on our website) on how CBT started from a grassroots level. It was his living room that a small group of families gathered for Shabbat services and meals. When you look back at the important events of our history (which includes performing the bris for our son Sam), Marc played an integral part:

- Selecting our beloved Rabbi
- Recruiting members
- Purchasing our building
- Creating our identity

As the second President, Barry emphasized growing our membership, religious school, presence in the community and social interaction. He inspired our developing community to evolve in a variety of ways (tzedakah, outreach, social events, etc.). It’s difficult to get a synagogue started, but sometimes it’s even more challenging to keep the momentum going. Barry not only kept it going at the right pace, but accelerated it.

Marc and Barry - our George Washington and John Adams. On behalf of our community we thank you for all of your accomplishments and setting the standard for your successors (including me)!



### ***Meet Marc Usatin - Founder and First President 1980 – 1985***

I have, as the founder and first President of CBT, been asked to write a blurb about the early days of the synagogue. The story of CBT’s conception can be found on our website, and I won’t review it here. In the early years it seemed that participation was almost universal. We, of course, had a core of officers and a board in whom decision making was vested. The way you got on the board was by me talking to you and explaining that we needed you. Somehow, in spite of us all being very busy with careers and young families, this tactic worked 99% of the time. Families would gather during religious school on Sundays for bagels and coffee, first at school and later on at Emile Villa’s or Lyons. Board meetings occurred once a month, also at those venues, where plans and decisions were made. Our first treasurer carried all our bills and checkbook in a shoe box that he would bring to meetings. He refused to allow me to pre sign checks that required two signatures to pay bills. That had to be done at board meetings. It wasn’t until several late notices occurred that he gave in. Every little decision was subjected to scrutiny from whether or not Hebrew should be started in kindergarten to what time services should be on the first and third Friday of the month. We grappled with how to survive, how to raise enough money thru

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This November we continue our [new] annual tradition of doing a Day of Service on Veteran's Day. Why Veteran's Day and why a "Day of Service?" Our teens have let us know that they have community service hours required for graduation or for in class projects. So I figured, why not have a system for our teens to do that service with Midrasha? Turns out, the majority of our teens don't have school on Veteran's Day and voila! The Veteran's Day of Service was born.

Last year, the day was themed around food and Jewish agricultural practices. We did some service at the AgPark Farm in Sunol, learning about organic farming practices and picking end of season peppers, eggplant and tomatoes. Of the 80 pounds of produce we picked on that rainy morning, the teens saved 10% for our group. (This is the opposite of the Jewish tzedakah practice of giving a minimum of 10%.) The remainder got donated that afternoon to the Contra Costa Food Bank. It was amazing to carry those vegetables across the farm, onto our bus and into the Food Bank warehouse! Our day ended with a communal Shabbat dinner we cooked for each other.

This year, our focus is on helping children at risk for homelessness. We're partnering with Shelter, Inc., creating a day of fun for the kids at their site in Antioch. The teens have picked a "carnival" theme for the day. Currently, there are 25 teens working together each Wednesday night during our elective period to plan the day. They have a budget, are creating the menu, picking activities and making materials list. The attention they are giving to the effort is quite impressive. I'm looking forward to sharing pictures and stories from our 2012 Day of Service!

Funding for our Day of Service was provided last year by a grant from Brandeis University's Institute for Informal Jewish Learning, the Legacy Heritage Fund and donors from our community. This year the program is funded by the Brenden Mann Foundation.

The Fall also brings about our first retreat of 2012-13! While they won't look very different to our teens, they are quite different for us. The big change this year is that the CJLL under the Federation is no longer running the retreats. Instead, Berkeley Midrasha has taken on the responsibility of hiring a new Retreats Director to administrate and execute the retreats. Our new Retreats Director, Jenni Mangel, is an amazing Jewish educator and leader.

Finally, mark your calendars! Our Annual Event is scheduled for March 2, 2013!! Join us!

### ***Shalom Connection***

**MAZEL TOV TO:**

Shirley and Jeffrey Weiner on the birth of grandson,  
Jacob Henry Weiner

**CONDOLENCES TO**

Jeffrey Weiner and family on the loss of his father,  
Max Weiner  
Barry Isseks and family on the loss of his brother,  
Edward Isseks

A little fun while decorating the sukkah.



### **CHANUKAH STARTS DECEMBER 8!**

Shop our Gift Shop Sunday, December 2

Tuesday, December 4

Sunday, December 9

for all your Chanukah needs!

See next month's Tikvah Talk for details.



# NOVEMBER 2012 Cheshvan - Kislev 5773

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				<b>1</b> Assisting Winter Nights @ Shell Ridge  I Have a Teshuvah: Reform Responsa & the Logic of Jewish Law 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm	<b>2</b> Assisting Winter Nights @ Shell Ridge  Camp Newman Retreat Grades 4 - 6  Family Shabbat Service 6:30 pm	<b>3</b> *Vayera Assisting Winter Nights @ Shell Ridge  Camp Newman Retreat Grades 4 - 6  Torah Study 9:00 am  Shabbat Service - Bat Mitzvah of Jocelyn Schoenholz 10:00 am
<b>4</b> Assisting Winter Nights @ Shell Ridge  Camp Newman Retreat Grades 4 - 6  Religious School  Sisterhood "Papercrafting" Event 9:45 am	<b>5</b> Assisting Winter Nights @ Shell Ridge  Ritual Committee Meeting 7:30 pm	<b>6</b> Meditation Workshop - The Art of Jewish Prayer 10:00 am - 11:00 am  Religious School 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> I Have a Teshuvah: Reform Responsa & the Logic of Jewish Law 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm	<b>9</b> Kristallnacht  Shabbat Service - Men of CBT participating. Guest Speaker. "Refuat Hanefesh" (A Healing of Spirit) 6:30 pm	<b>10</b> *Hayyei Sarah  Torah Study 9:00 am  Tot Shabbat 9:00 am  Shabbat Service - Bar Mitzvah of Jordan Levy 10:00 am  Trivia Night! Doors open at 6:30 pm
<b>11</b> Religious School  Men of CBT - Bocce Ball 10:00 am - 1:00 pm  Hebrew Boot Camp I 12:15 pm - 1:15 pm	<b>12</b> Executive Board Meeting 6:00 pm	<b>13</b> Meditation Workshop - The Art of Jewish Prayer 10:00 am - 11:00 am  Religious School 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm  Sisterhood Dinner Out 6:30 pm	<b>14</b> Rosh Hodesh - Kislev  Ed Committee Meeting 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm	<b>15</b> I Have a Teshuvah: Reform Responsa & the Logic of Jewish Law 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm	<b>16</b> SHIR JOY - New Members Honored 7:30 pm	<b>17</b> *Toledot  Torah Study 9:00 am  Shabbat Service - Bar Mitzvah of Eli Stark-Elster 10:00 am
<b>18</b> NO Religious School  Kitchen clean-up! Volunteers appreciated! 9:00 am  Sisterhood Trip to De Young Museum 10:00 am	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> NO Religious School  Meditation Workshop - The Art of Jewish Prayer 10:00 am - 11:00 am	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> (Office closed)  THANKSGIVING	<b>23</b> (Office closed)  Shabbat Service 6:30 pm	<b>24</b> *Vayetze  Torah Study 9:00 am  Morning Minyan 10:00 am
<b>25</b> NO Religious School	<b>26</b> General Board Meeting 6:30 pm	<b>27</b> Meditation Workshop - The Art of Jewish Prayer 10:00 am - 11:00 am  Religious School 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> I Have a Teshuvah: Reform Responsa & the Logic of Jewish Law 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm	<b>30</b> Shabbat Service 6:30 pm	

# DECEMBER 2012 Kislev - Tevet 5773

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						<b>1</b> *Vayishlah Torah Study 9:00 am Shabbat Service - Bat Mitzvah of Jillian Varona 10:00 am
<b>2</b> Chanukah in the Gift Shop! Religious School Camp Newman Promotional Visit! 9:45 am - 10:15 am Hebrew Boot Camp I 12:15 pm - 1:15 pm	<b>3</b> Ritual Committee Meeting 7:30 pm	<b>4</b> Chanukah in the Gift Shop 4:00 pm Religious School 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm	<b>5</b> Jewish Coalition for Literacy 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm Sisterhood Chanukah Party 6:30 pm	<b>6</b> I Have a Teshuvah: Reform Responsa & the Logic of Jewish Law 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm	<b>7</b> Family Shabbat Service - New Members Honored "Refuat Hanefesh" (A Healing of Spirit) 6:30 pm	<b>8</b> *Vayeshev Chanukah - 1st Night Torah Study 9:00 am Tot Shabbat 9:00 am Shabbat Service - Bat Mitzvah of Megan Bristow 10:00 am
<b>9</b> Chanukah - 2nd Night Chanukah in the Gift Shop! Religious School and Hanukah Zimriah Hebrew Boot Camp I 12:15 pm - 1:15 pm	<b>10</b> Chanukah - 3rd Night	<b>11</b> Chanukah - 4th Night Religious School 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm	<b>12</b> Chanukah - 5th Night	<b>13</b> Chanukah - 6th Night Rosh Hodesh - Tevet I Have a Teshuvah: Reform Responsa & the Logic of Jewish Law 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm	<b>14</b> Chanukah - 7th Night Shabbat Service - Choir! Charter Members Honored at Services! 6:30 pm	<b>15</b> *Miketz Chanukah - Last Night Torah Study 9:00 am Shabbat Service - 6th graders participating 10:00 am
<b>16</b> Religious School Book Sisters 10:00 am Men of CBT - "The Grinch Who Stole Chanukah - and Then Gave It Back!" 10:00 am Hebrew Boot Camp I 12:15 pm - 1:15 pm	<b>17</b> Executive Board Meeting 6:00 pm General Board Meeting 6:30 pm	<b>18</b> Religious School 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm	<b>19</b> Education Committee Meeting 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm	<b>20</b> I Have a Teshuvah: Reform Responsa & the Logic of Jewish Law 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm	<b>21</b> SHIR JOY 7:30 pm	<b>22</b> Vayiggash Torah Study 9:00 am Lay Led Morning Minyan 10:00 am
<b>23</b> NO Religious School	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> (Office closed) NO Religious School	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Shabbat Service 6:30 pm	<b>29</b> *Vayehi Torah Study 9:00 am Morning Minyan 10:00 am
<b>30</b> NO Religious School	<b>31</b>					

# THE UNDER ONE TENT CONTRA COSTA JEWISH BOOK FESTIVAL

Admission is free unless otherwise specified.  
For more information and direction to all venues:  
[jfed.org/bookfestival](http://jfed.org/bookfestival) or call 510.318.6453.

**Friday, Oct. 19, 7:30 PM**

**My Father's Voice: Reflections on Neuroscience and Immortality**

Rabbi Ralph Mecklenburger discusses the latest discoveries in neuroscience and how they complement or challenge Jewish assumptions about the soul.

**Venue and Sponsor:** Cong. B'nai Tikvah

**Sunday, Oct. 21, 2:30 PM**

**Storytime, Cookies & Milk: A Program for Preschoolers and Kindergarten Students**

Our stories will be in both Hebrew and English.

**Venue and Sponsor:** Contra Costa Jewish Day School

**Sunday, Oct. 28, 10:00 AM**

**Teach Your Children Well:  
Parenting for Authentic Success**

*A Bagels & Books program*

Educator Madeline Levine, Ph.D. provides us with essential "how-to's" for childhood success.

**Venue:** Cong. B'nai Shalom

**Sponsors:** Cong. B'nai Shalom, Contra Costa JCC and Contra Costa Jewish Day School

**Suggested donation:** \$5

**Monday, Oct. 30, 7:00 PM**

**The Life and Legend of Moshe Dayan**

Mordechai Bar-On, Dayan's Chief of Staff and a founder of Peace Now, provides insight into this controversial hero.

**Venue:** Temple Isaiah

**Sponsors:** Jewish Federation and Temple Isaiah Israel Committee

**Saturday, Nov. 3, 7:30 PM**

**Funny: The Book**

Called the "Sixth Marx Brother" by none other than Groucho's son, stand-up comic and screenwriter David Misch (*Mork and Mindy*) hilariously reveals the history of comedy.

**Venue:** Cong. B'nai Shalom.

**Sponsors:** Cong. B'nai Shalom, Contra Costa JCC and Diablo Valley Hadassah

**Admission:** \$15 (includes wine & dessert reception)

**Thursday, Nov. 8, 7:30 PM**

**The Liberator (Annual Kristallnacht Lecture)**

Best-selling author and British historian Alex Kershaw follows one soldier's 500-day odyssey from the beaches of Sicily to the gates of Dachau.

**Venue:** The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life

**Sponsors:** Jewish Federation and The Jewish Community Foundation of the East Bay, and The Magnes Collection

**We thank Jo-Ann and Arnold Jacobson, M.D., and Carole and Donald Chaiken for their generous underwriting of the Festival.**

**Tuesday, Nov. 13, 1:00 PM Reception, 1:30 PM Lecture  
The Psychology of Jewish Humor, Part I**

Psychologist Nily Shiryon asks us: What is Jewish humor? What is Jewish humor not?

**Venue and Sponsor:** Reutlinger Community for Jewish Living

**Wednesday, Nov. 14, 7:30 PM**

**Screening of "Good-bye Columbus"**

Based on the novella by famed author Phillip Roth, this film presents a satirical look at Jewish suburban life.

**Venue:** Beth Chaim Cong.

**Sponsors:** Beth Chaim Cong. and East Bay Jewish Film Festival

**Admission:** \$8

**Sunday, Nov. 18, 3:00 PM**

**Exit Laughing**

Victoria Zackheim's anthology features funny and intimate personal stories by Joshua Braff, Malachy McCourt, Kathi Kamen Goldmark, Ellen Sussman and others.

**Venue and Sponsor:** Cong. B'nai Shalom and Sisterhood

**Admission:** \$7; CBS Sisterhood Admission: \$5

**Tuesday, Nov. 20, 1:00 PM Reception, 1:30 PM Lecture  
The Psychology of Jewish Humor, Part II**

Nily Shiryon discusses how, why and what is wrong with the picture of "the Jewish woman" in the field of humor.

**Venue and Sponsor:** Reutlinger Community for Jewish Living

**Sunday, Dec. 2, 10:00 AM**

**Foxes in the Vineyard**

*A Bagels & Book Program*

Michael Cooper, M.D. discusses Templars, Nazis and the battle for Jerusalem in this historical novel set in 1948.

**Venue and Sponsor:** Cong. B'nai Shalom

**Sunday, Jan. 6, 3:00 - 5:00 PM**

**Master Puppeteer Jen Miriam with Her Amazing and Fabulous Puppet Performers**

**Venue:** Contra Costa Jewish Day School

**Sponsors:** PJ Library, Cong. B'nai Shalom, Gan Ilan and Contra Costa Jewish Day School

**Saturday, Jan. 12, 5:00 PM**

**How Do We Know Right from Wrong**

Rabbi Ralph Mecklenburger, author of *Religious Brains*, explores what cognitive science reveals about belief, morality, community and our relationship with God.

**Venue and Sponsor:** Temple Isaiah

**Looking Ahead: Wednesday, April 17**

**The Bar Mitzvah and the Beast with Matt Biers Ariel**

**10:30 AM** at Temple Isaiah and **7:30 PM** at Beth Chaim.

In this humorous and poignant memoir, we follow 13 year-old Yonah as he celebrates his rite of passage with a family bike ride from San Francisco to Washington, D.C.

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## **Sisterhood News.....**

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(continued from page 4)

### **Wednesday, December 5 - Sisterhood Chanukah Party at CBT 6:30pm**

Meet for a potluck dinner – **no meat** - dairy or vegetarian only. We'll make No Sew Blankets for patients at Children's Hospital. Bring an unwrapped toy for "Toys for Tots."

### **Sunday, December 16 – Book Sisters at Ravitz Home 10am**

"I feel bad about my Neck" by Nora Ephron. Potuck brunch – no rules. RSVP: Raynaravitz@gmail.com.

### **Sunday, January 6 – Trip to Contemporary Jewish Museum**

### **Sunday, January 13 – Lecture "Subversive Scripture, Tales from the Bible That'll Make You Say 'What'" 10am**

### **Friday, January 18 - Sisterhood Shabbat at CBT 7:30pm**

### **Thursday, February 28 – "Singing in the Rain" Leshar**

Watch future articles for ticket ordering information for this evening event..

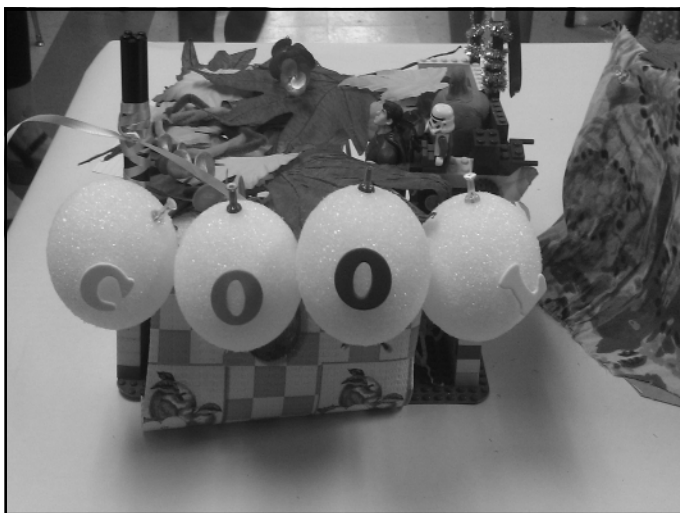
### **TBD – International Jewish Film Festival Movie & Dinner night**

### **Sunday, March 17 – Women's Seder in our Social Hall 4 pm**

#### **Book Sisters choices for later in the year:**

"The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks" by Rebecca Skloot  
"Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail" by Cheryl Strayed  
"In the Garden of Beasts: Love, Terror, an American Family in Hitler's Berlin" by Erik Larson.

Rayna Ravitz (raynaravitz@gmail.com)



One Cool Sukkah built by one of our students.

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## **President....**

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dues and fundraisers to stay afloat. I have memories of our first meeting when I asked 50 people to donate \$10 (continued from page 7)

to cover initial expenses and advertising. Half of them never showed up at a meeting again and many more never gave a dime. The same happened when later on we asked for \$100/year in dues. With the help Rabbi Maurie Hirschman of the UAHC we came to realize we had to value what we were doing and ask people to contribute to our joint success. All of these early decisions were painful and important, and although you may think so, not obvious. Somehow through hard work and the dedication of lots of people we became more established and known within the community. After serving 5 years as President it was time for a new dynamic and leadership. So I put my arm around Barry Slavin and said how about becoming the next President?! He was just what the congregation needed at that moment in time. I'll let him take it from here!



### ***Meet Barry Slavin - President 1985 – 1987***

Ronna and I moved to California in 1972. When our daughter Stephanie was ready for Religious School we joined CBT, at the urging of founder Marc Usatin, during the second year of the Temple's history. I followed Marc as temple board president and served two years. When I was president, the congregation consisted of 116 families, and my charge was to help build a system of managing a burgeoning temple enterprise! Ronna served on the Religious School and Midrasha committees.

I was a founding member of the softball league and captained the Tikvah Ones to a league championship. As part of my interaction with the CJCC, I was asked to join their board and became the only two time president during my 15 years on the board.

My business career included 25 years in various sales and sales management positions in the clothing industry, and following that career, Ronna and I owned Worden Travel Service for 17 years. Currently I work part-time for the City of Walnut Creek as the Golf Course Liaison, overseeing the contract operator at Boundary Oak Golf Course. I am a past president of the Rotary Club of Walnut Creek. My interests include playing with my two granddaughters, Sadie and Mabel, playing golf, reading, watching sporting events on TV, and growing succulents.

Congratulations to Rabbi Asher on his tenure and impending retirement!

## UPCOMING FAMILY EVENTS AT CBT

### FRIDAY NIGHT FAMILY SERVICE and BOOK DRIVE Friday, November 2 at 6:30 pm

Please join us for our Family Shabbat service. This wonderful service is held on the first Friday of every month at 6:30.

Welcome Shabbat with other families with an evening of music and friendship.

After services, please stay to schmooze and nosh as we hold our Oneg Shabbat in our Social Hall.

For this Friday we request that you please bring your donation of any new or used books for children for the East Bay Children's Book Project. A collection bin has been set up in the lobby to accept donations.

This project has given out more than 800,000 and we would like to help them reach their goal of donating 1,000,000 books to children in need.

### TOT SHABBAT - Saturday, November 10 at 9am

Please join Cantor Chabon for our Tot Shabbat 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 oneg.

**Tot Shabbat will also be held on December 8 at 9am.**

### NEW MEMBER RECOGNITION EVENTS! CHARTER MEMBER RECOGNITION EVENT!

Please join us as we honor our newest members at one of two Shabbat services.

On Friday, **November 16**, new members will be recognized during the Shir Joy Service which begins at 7:30 pm.

Come at 6:30 pm for a wine and cheese social hosted by the Membership Committee.

We will also be honoring our new members at the Family Shabbat Service on **Friday, December 7**, at 6:30 pm.

Please join us in decorating your own cupcake at the Oneg following that service.

And our Charter Members will be honored on the 7th night of Chanukah, **December 14** at 6:30 pm.

All members and prospective members are welcome at any of these events!



Jewish Coalition for Literacy

[www.jclread.org](http://www.jclread.org)

Next Contra Costa session  
Here at CBT  
December 5, 2012 1 – 4 pm

The Jewish Coalition for Literacy (JCL) recruits and trains volunteers to become reading tutors in the San Francisco Bay Area's under-resourced PUBLIC elementary schools. Tutors are matched with a K-3 grade student, and the pair spends the semester or school year developing a strong relationship while building literacy skills. 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, providing the confidence and the strategies that will enable them to become successful readers. The ability to read is a vital tool to participating in our economic mainstream. If you would like to register or get additional information, please go to [www.jclread.org](http://www.jclread.org) (and click on trainings) or call Samantha Hodges, Program Associate at 415 369-9978 ext. 106.

The three hour training session conducted by the Jewish Coalition for Literacy (JCL) reminds you why you love reading and teaches you how to help others acquire reading fluency and comprehension skills. No experience necessary - just a willingness to help and complete the training.

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.**

The B'nai Tikvah Trivia Guys Present

**TEAM TRIVIA NIGHT 2012!**

**Saturday, November 10, 2012**

**Doors Open @ 6:30 p.m. Play starts @ 7:00 p.m.**

**Over 100 fun, brain-challenging questions**

**Entry fee \$175 per team; teams of 6-8 players**

No trivia expertise necessary! If you watch "Jeopardy" or "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?," or even if you just think you're smarter than a fifth grader, then this event is for you.

This is a TEAM event with 6-8 players per team -- you use your collective minds to answer the questions. Maybe you can't recall the name of the cruise ship that ran aground in Italy in January of this year, but somehow it reminds you of Contra Costa County. That might be enough to jog a teammate into remembering the Costa Concordia. That's how the team dynamic works. You'll be surprised to discover just how much minutia you do know!

This event is open to everyone, CBT members or not, so get a team from your office, school, or neighborhood. Have friends in other synagogues? Challenge them to field a team. Don't have enough for a full team? No problem. Sign up as a single or small group and we'll do our best to pair you up that night! (Registration fee for individuals is \$30 per person.)

We welcome teams of high school and college students. We already have several sponsors for student teams. Even if you don't think you'd enjoy playing, you can sponsor a team yourself. We're happy to accept donations that can be used to sponsor student teams or otherwise support the event.

To participate, print a registration form from our website, [www.tikvah.org](http://www.tikvah.org) and send it in.  
Team tables must be reserved in advance.