

Vol. 30 Iss. 4

Congregation B'nai Tikvah Walnut Creek, CA

### December 2010

# From Where I Stand...

Bu Rabbi Raphael Asher



Having just returned from Rome, visiting our daughter Mira, my wife and I are well aware of the worldwide dominance of Christianity. The Catholic Church alone dwarfs the Jewish population in about the same proportions that the Vatican outsizes B'nai Tikvah. Its corporate power for the good and the beautiful has been immense, but I don't envy the Church's track record over the centuries for its abuses of power.

I did not walk through all the museums and Christian icons with a chip on my shoulder, quite content in the Chanukah refrain that it is 'not my might and not by power' that all will live in peace. And in the same way as our chil-

dren learn that the cruze of oil had wondrous powers, we hope you support us in teaching them that a simple menorah in the window can make as big a statement as all the Christmas paraphernalia in the weeks to come.

On Friday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, shortly after our modest celebrations have ended, I will be reflecting on our trip to Rome. I will also reflect on Nostra Aetate, the Catholic revision of its attitudes towards Jews and Judaism, that goes back only to 1965, but has effected great changes in Jewish-Christian relations.

Meanwhile, enjoy the delicacy of Chanukah unencumbered by religious icons and celebrate its power for freedom rather than domination.

# **Reflections...**

By Cantor Jennie Chabon



I found out this morning that a beloved congregant of ours died this weekend. Several times each year, the rabbi and I receive such news, and we prepare ourselves for the exquisitely beautiful experience of witnessing the grief of a family in mourning. Often we are in mourning as well. But this morning was the first time that I burst into tears upon hearing the news of the passing of a member of our congregation.

I called a dear friend and colleague of mine to help me think through what I was feeling. And she had the most interesting response to my tears. She said, "What you are feeling is so hard, but I'm happy to hear in your voice and in your grief the love you have for your congregation. It's beautiful that you have come to a place of such love for your

community that you are feeling this loss so profoundly."

I knew that talking to her would make me feel better, but I didn't expect to come away from the conversation with a feeling of deep gratitude. Because of course she's right. You don't feel grief if love isn't at the foundation of your sorrow. I have been the cantor of B'nai Tikvah for six years. I knew when I began serving this community that it would take me a long time to find my place here, and a long time for people to learn to trust me. That has been true. It wasn't until a few years ago that the congregation and I found our rhythm together. But it was not until this morning, when those tears began pouring out of my eyes in the rabbi's office, that I realized just how much I have grown to love this community and all of the wonderful people who belong to it.

When I sat down in front of my computer this morning, I was planning on writing about our Shir Joy services, and about how we are going to experiment with having them on Shabbat mornings as well. I was planning on talking about how incredibly exciting it is when our sanctuary is filled with people singing along with me--praying with me--on a Shabbat evening. And about how much I want to teach our members about the unique beauty of Shabbat morning services by bringing our Shir Joy band to play with us on Saturday mornings. That is all still true. The rabbi and I are devoted to teaching this congregation to enjoy and appreciate the peace and tranquility of a Shabbat morning service. Our first Shir Joy morning service will be on Shabbat Shira, January 15<sup>th</sup>, at 10:00 am. Mark your calendars.

I was planning on writing an entire article about Shir Joy this morning, but as it happens, life took an unexpected turn and I found myself writing, with love, about this warm, open community of people that has become my own. Through grief I have found gratitude. Through loss, joy. Thank you so much for allowing me to serve as your cantor, for allowing me to do work that makes me feel so alive.

**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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# Members Only section of the CBT Website!

(secured with encryption technology)

You are now able to ✓ update your membership information ✓ look up your Yahrzeits ✓ view and pay your balances ✓ make donations ✓ sign up for events ✓ and look up other CBT members.

Log on to our website, www.Tikvah.org click on Member Login, Agree to our Terms, click on 'forget your ID or Password and Go! (copy and paste your password in the 1<sup>st</sup> time, then change it)

CBT students off to Camp Newman for 3rd - 6th grade weekend.

### 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** (subject *Tikvah Talk*) or by mail to 25 Hillcroft Way, Walnut Creek, CA 94597, (925) 933-5397.

# President's Message

By Lisa Wenger



A few weeks ago, the General Board had the opportunity to meet with Rabbi Alan Henkin, the Union Rabbi for the West District of the URJ. The main purpose of the meeting was for Rabbi Henkin to explain the structure of the URJ to our board and to make sure that we all know how to access the many resources that the URJ has to offer. After the official business was completed, Rabbi Henkin took a few min-

utes to talk to us about the issue that looms on the horizon for Congregation B'nai Tikvah: Rabbi Asher's retirement in June, 2014.

Rabbi Henkin's main advice, as I heard it, was that as the time for a rabbinic search approaches, we should resist the temptation to make a list of qualities that we want a new rabbi to have. Instead, we should delineate who we want to be as a congregation. We could then allow our identity to lead us to the right candidate. The URJ has resources to help us with this process, which we will probably undertake several years before we begin to look for a new rabbi. The Union suggests that we survey our congregants, meet with them in small focus groups, and converse with them one-on-one. I hope that when the time comes, you will all want to be part of this process, both asking and answering the relevant questions.

Meanwhile, Rabbi Henkin's framing of this issue has caused me to think about what I think CBT is or should be. It's all a bit abstract for me, but I do see the importance of asking the question. So far, I have come up with the following characteristics of our present community:

- 1. We are a small-to-medium-sized congregation that doesn't' want to be a big congregation.
- 2. Family is important to us, both because we want to be family to one another and because we want our families to be part of CBT for generations to come.
- 3. We care about Israel, social action, Jewish education, and providing a Jewish context for our life-cycle events, but no single one of those items dominates.
- 4. We love Cantor Chabon's music!
- 5. As one of our slogans says, we combine 'pride in Reform" and "respect for tradition."

I have also thought about what we are not:

- 1. We are not a b'nai mitzvah factory.
- 2. We are not gossipy or political.
- 3. We are not judgmental about how others choose to express their Jewishness.

I think our best qualities reflect the good qualities of Rabbi Asher, Cantor Chabon, and our founding families. They set a warm, accepting, low-key tone for us that I hope we will always have. I look forward to hearing what you all think about who we are and who we want to be.

# Turn It, Turn It, Turn It Again

By Phil Hankin, Director of Education



A few years back, I had the opportunity to attend an event at Temple Israel in Alameda honoring the 50 year plus members of the synagogue, as well as all of the past presidents. The point of the gathering was to honor their rich history and give an opportunity for those more recent members to see who the pillars of the community were. It was a lovely event, one that had special meaning to me. My

grandfather was being honored as both a 50+ year member and a past president. I was asked if I could lead some Israeli dancing for the congregation during the event. Here was my opportunity to honor my grandparents (my grandmother, the "matriarch" of Temple Israel passed away 10 years ago) in the shul that they helped build (they moved to their present location in 1979) where I spent many Shabbat evenings eating my grandmother's cookies and running around the social hall. How could I pass this up? On top of this, I had my wife and kids in tow. This was the ultimate example of L'dor VaDor. My heart was warm with nostalgia as we circled the room dancing Mayim, Yesh lanu Tayish, the chicken dance (my daughter's request), and many more. I know that my "Oma" was beaming with pride.

I am telling you this story because memories are very powerful and in some instances the ones that keep people Jewish. As a Jewish educator who is entrusted with the responsibility of creating memories for the young people of the synagogue, it is my hope that you, the adults of B'nai Tikvah, continue the process of building powerful Jewish memories for your kids and grandkids. It is not just what happens in the shul but it is also what happens at home. Since it is Chanukah time and the celebrations that surround holidays are some of the most distinctive memories one can have, how many of you can remember lighting the Chanukiah on a dark, December evening and then parading around the house singing Ma Otzur? Pesach seders from your childhood? Purim costumes? Planting trees on Tu B'shevat? Sitting in your sukkah on Sukkot? The more we keep memories like these alive the more we remember where we come from. This can only help guide us in our life long Jewish path, no matter which path we choose. Honoring our elders and our past is one of the greatest mitzvot that we can do. As the time changes and it gets darker earlier, keep the light of your past alive within you and your children.

Chag Sameach!!

# Sisterhood News

It's a busy time of year but what better way to spend it than with women from CBT!

### Sunday, December 5, 10am - Mah Jongg

Sunday morning Mah Jongg is being coordinated by Marcie Unger. If you are interested contact Marcie Unger at <u>marcyunger@hotmail.com</u>.

### Tuesday, December 7, 6 pm - Chanukah Dinner, Rosh Chodesh and Toys for Tots Drive

Let's meet in our beautiful Social Hall for a pot-luck dinner and join Cantor Chabon in this Chanukah celebration. Bring a dairy or vegetarian dish to share for dinner at 6, plus a candle for the Rosh Chodesh service at 7:30. I don't need to tell you that Cantor Chabon is very spiritual and has many lessons for life for us. Be prepared for a special evening! This will also be our collection time for our "Toys for Tots" event as a Tzedakah opportunity Bring a new unwrapped toy to donate.

### Sunday, December 12 - Contemporary Jewish Museum.

We will be taking a tour of Reclaimed: Paintings from the Collection of Jacques Goudstikker.

This exhibit reveals the extraordinary legacy of Jacques Goudstikker, a preeminent Jewish art dealer in Amsterdam, whose vast collection of masterpieces was almost lost forever during the Holocaust. In 2006, after working for years with a team of Art Historians and legal experts, Goudstikker's family was able to reclaim 200 of his paintings from the Dutch government. The exhibit we will be seeing contains 45 pieces of the recovered art, which ranges from 16th century Italian works to 17th century Dutch portraits, still lifes, and landscapes. Please join us as we celebrate this great restitution.

In addition to the exhibit of Reclaimed Paintings, we are fortunate to see the art of <u>H.A. Rey and Margaret Rey</u>. We all know of their wonderful character, "Curious George" and his many escapades. However, the artists were born in Hamburg and were living in Paris from 1936-1940. They fled Paris just as the Nazis were approaching. They fled on bicycles with their artwork. After they escaped from Paris they had a four month journey across France, Spain, Portugal and Brazil. The couple reached New York in 1940. In all, the Reys authored and illustrated over 30 books, most of them for children. The exhibit features nearly 80 original drawings of George and other characters, preparatory books, vintage photos and documentation related to the Reys' escape from Nazi Europe. It will be interesting to learn more about the artists whose work we have enjoyed so thoroughly.

The Contemporary Jewish Museum visit is \$9 / adults, \$7 / seniors. Tour will begin at 11:00 am and we'll be taking BART from Walnut Creek. Lunch will follow the tour at the Museum if you want to stay. More details to follow. To confirm a reservation for this outing, please email Susan Friedman.

### <u>Sunday, January 9 – MOMA tour</u>

#### Friday, January 14 – Sisterhood Shabbat

Cantor Chabon will be leading the Sermon in Song this Shabbat. Sisterhood members will have an opportunity to participate in the service.

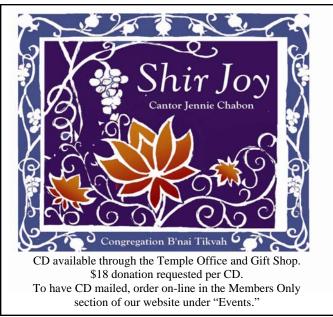
#### Tuesday, January 18 - Book Sisters

We will have a potluck dinner and a discussion of "The Love Ceiling" by Jean Davies Okimoto . Bring a vegetarian or dairy dish to share at CBT. RSVP to Raynarav@aol.com

#### Sunday, January 30 – 10:30 am Chair Yoga TBD - Kids and Internet Security TBD – Aromatherapy workshop TBD – No Sew Blankets

Rayna Ravitz





Tikvah Talk

December 2010

# Are you depressed? Do you know someone who is?



P'tach Libeynu presents Combating Depression: A Treatment That Works

Renowned psychologist Jackie Persons, Ph.D. will discuss Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Depression

# Monday, Dec. 6, 7:30-9 p.m in our Sanctuary

Jacqueline Persons is the director of the San Francisco Bay Area Center for Cognitive Therapy in Oakland and has provided cognitive therapy for 20 years. This practical, present-focused approach has been shown in controlled studies to be as effective as drug treatment for depression and anxiety disorders. \$5 Suggested Donation RSVP: diana@openourhearts.net, 988-9707

P'tach Libeynu, "Open Our Hearts," the Mental Health Project of the Jewish community in Contra Costa County, is sponsored by Congregations B'nai Tikvah, Beth Chaim and B'nai Shalom, Temple Isaiah and Women of Isaiah, Contra Costa JCC, Jewish Community Federation of the Greater East Bay, Jewish Family and Children's Services of the East Bay and the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center.

### www.openourhearts.net



# Shalom Connection

Condolences to: Jennifer Rosenberg and family on the loss of her father, Bob Rosenberg

### Welcome to our New Members:

Alyce and Steve Kados Jamie 3/24/2000

Debra and Gary Zupo Aeryn 9/20/05, Kowyn 8/30/2008

**Barbara and Sidney Meyers** 

# UPCOMING ONEG SPONSORS

December 3 - Family Shabbat service Brooks/Manas, Garrett, Guterman/Polcin, Wilk

December 10 - Shabbat service Schwartz/Turner, Tama

December 17 - Shir Joy Dorin, G. Gould, Klein, Rose/Lerman

December 24 and 31 Sponsors needed



Thank you to our members for sponsoring these Onegs.

December 2010

Tikvah Talk



Our Shir Joy vocalists and accompanists (l-r) Lisa Zeiler, Kevin Weber, Leah Taylor Gibbons, Shira Kammen, Julie Batz, Cantor Chabon, Debbie Fier, Laura Presnick, Irene Jacobson

# CBT PRESCHOOL WORKSHOPS

Come and explore Judaism with your preschooler and discover fun and creative ways to learn together through a series of monthly workshops on Sunday mornings.



Hanukkah - December 5, 2010 Tu B'Shevat - January 9, 2011

Workshops begin at 9:30am on Sundays with our Religious School students for T'fillah, and then move to the library, ending at 11:40am.

While we do not charge for the preschool workshops, we appreciate a \$10 donation per session. Your RSVP allows us to plan for wonderful mornings. RSVP to facilitator Jordana Green at or Phil Hankin, Director of Education, at 925.933.5397 or philhankin@tikvah.org.

Please let us know if you would like a monthly e-mail reminder of preschool workshops.

For more information, call the Temple office at 925.933.5397 or contact Jordana Green.



# Upcoming B'nai Mitzvahs

Bar Mitzvah of Max Pienkny son of Christin and Andy Pienkny and Vanessa Smith Saturday, December 4

> Bar Mitzvah of Ian Jones son of Daniel Jones and Nicole Jones Saturday, December 11

Mazel Tov! The Congregation is invited to join the families for Shabbat services at 10 am.



It's time to...

... celebrate among family and friends.

... tend the flames of Jewish history.

...remember our ancestors' legacy.



*lsn't it time to think about your legacy?* 

As CBT embarks on its Legacy program, **Tikvah l'Atid (Hope for the Future),** please consider the Temple in your plans, and be receptive when a fellow congregant calls in the coming months.

# DECEMBER 2010 Kislev - Tevet 5771

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Chanukah - 1st night Religious School	2 Chanukah - 2nd night Religious School	3 Chanukah - 3rd night Shabbat dinner 5:30 pm Family Shabbat Service w/Choir! 6:30 pm	4 * Miketz Chanukah - 4th night Shabbat Service - Bar Mitzvah of Max Pienkny 10:00 am
5 Chanukah - 5th night Chanukah ZIMRIAH in Religious School Yoga Class 9:00 am Preschool Workshop - Chanukah 9:30 am	6 Chanukah - 6th night P'tach Libeynu Event 7:00 pm Hebrew Class 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm Ritual Committee Meeting 7:30 pm	7 Chanukah - 7th night Religious School Sisterhood Pot luck Chanukah dinner & Rosh Chodesh 6:00 pm	8 Chanukah - 8th night Religious School	9 Religious School	10 Shabbat Service 6:30 pm	11 * Vayiggash Shabbat Service - Bar Mitzvah of Ian Jones 10:00 am
12 Religious School Yoga Class 9:00 am Sisterhood to CJM 11:00 am	13 Executive Board Meeting 6:00 pm General Board Meeting 6:30 pm	14 Religious School	15 Religious School	16 Religious School	17 Shabbat Service - Shir Joy 7:30 pm	18 * Vayechi Shabbat Service - 5th graders participating 10:00 am
<b>19</b> NO Religious School Yoga Class 9:00 am	20	21 NO Religious School	22 NO Religious School	23 NO Religious School	24 (Office closed) Shabbat Service 6:30 pm	25 * Shemot Morning Minyan w/Rabbi 10:00 am
26 NO Religious School	27	28 NO Religious School	29 NO Religious School	30 NO Religious School	31 (Office closed) Shabbat Service 6:30 pm	

# CBT Is Reading.....

### CBT Book Group

*"Outwitting History: the Amazing Adventures of a Man Who Rescued A Million Yiddish Books"* by Aaron Lansky. Sunday, December 12 at CBT 3 - 5 pm

### **Book Sisters**

*"The Love Ceiling"* by Jean Davies Okimoto will be discussed Tuesday, January 18 at 6:30 pm over a pot luck dinner in our Social Hall.



Dinner before Shir Joy - we were packed!

# JANUARY 2011 Tevet - Adar I 5771

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 * Vaera HAPPY NEW YEAR! Morning Minyan w/Rabbi & Cantor 10:00 am
2 Religious School Yoga Class 9:00 am	3 Hebrew Class 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm	4 Religious School	5 Religious School	6 Religious School	7 Family Shabbat Service 6:30 pm	8 * Bo Morning Minyan w/Rabbi 10:00 am
9 Religious School Sisterhood to MOMA Yoga Class 9:00 am Preschool Workshop - Tu B'Shevat 9:30 am	10 Executive Board Meeting 6:00 pm Hebrew Class 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm	11 Religious School	12 Religious School	13 Religious School	14 Shabbat Service - Sisterhood Shabbat - "Sermon in Song" 6:30 pm	15 * Beshalach/Shira "SHIR JOY" for Shabbat Morning 10:00 am
16 NO Religious School	17 (Office closed) Martin Luther King Jr. Day	18 Religious School Book Sisters @ CBT 6:30 pm	19 Religious School	20 Religious School TU B'SHEVAT	21 Shabbat dinner 6:15 pm Shir Joy 7:30 pm	22 * Yitro Morning Minyan w/Rabbi 10:00 am
23 Religious School - Tu B'Shvat Celebration Yoga Class 9:00 am	24 General Board Meeting 6:30 pm Hebrew Class 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm	25 Religious School	26 Religious School	27 Religious School	28 Shabbat Service 6:30 pm	29 * Mishpatim Shabbat Service - 4th graders participating 10:00 am
30 Religious School Yoga Class 9:00 am	<b>31</b> Hebrew Class 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm					

# SHIR JOY



FRIDAY, JANUARY 21 Dinner 6:15 pm Shir Joy 7:30 pm

Have you visited the Tzedaka Box in our lobby recently?



CBT Men's Group has selected the next Tzedaka Box recipient

Donations made by December 31will benefit CBT's General Fund



Tikvah Talk

# Contributions

### **GENERAL FUND**

In memory of Bernard Liebman In memory of Harry Hoffenbratel The Antebi family In memory of Phillip Weintraub Nancy and Arthur Solomon Ronna and Barry Slavin In memory of Ann Levine Ethel and Joseph Weiss In memory of Marjorie Shuer Mery and Jerome Chaney In memory of Leon Weiss In memory of Ameda Weiss Elizabeth and William Roberts In memory of David I. Dobin Frances and Rabbi Joel Dobin In memory of Chester Tobias Allan and Carol Tobias In memory of Edward Fielding The Fulching family In memory of Yuri Moskalenko Rakhil and Naum Sadetskiv In memory of Marty and Ruby Goodfriend Dutchy and Jerry Hankin In memory of Gerald Kowitz Leslie Kowitz and Eric Roswall In memory of Doris Levine Nancy and Arthur Solomon Robin and Larry Gordon Miriam and Stan Newman Judith and James Mueller Jo Ann McGinnis and Israel Shankel-Simmons

### RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

With thanks to Rabbi Asher for affixing our mezuza Andrea and Tim Dapper In memory of Anatole Shepievker Regina and Oleg Tachkov In memory of Doris Levine Anna and Walter Gewing In honor of Lydia Lapporte's Bat Mitzvah Anne and Seymour Lapporte Ruth Allen With gratitude for and in appreciation of my conversion Deanne Broom

### CANTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

In memory of Doris Levine Vicki Anderle and family With gratitude for and in honor of Christin's conversion Andy Pienkny In appreciation of my conversion Deanne Broom

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

In memory of Sydney Rapoport *Cookie Svingos* In memory of Philip Weintraub *Terri and Brent Waterman* In memory of Belle Lerner *Nessa and Bob Wilk* In memory of Anthony Micco *Faith Silvani* 

### <u>CANTOR STEPHEN RICHARDS MUSICAL ENRICH-</u> <u>MENT / CHOIR FUND</u>

In memory of Judy Silver In memory of Adele Morse Platt In memory of Sidney Solomon *Marjorie and Cantor Stephen Richards* 

### **ABRAHAM NIVER SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

In appreciation of our High Holyday services and David Niver Rose Cohen and family

### SOCIAL ACTION FUND

In memory of John Sutherland Monica Salusky and John Sutherland In memory of Charlotte Gilman Carol Reif and Jeffrey Gilman

### **CAPITAL CAMPAIGN**

In memory of Doris Levine Rayna and Richard Ravitz In honor of Rayna and Richard Ravitz Carole Hecker Lynne Hurand In memory of Julie Cherry Craig Cherry

## IN LOVING MEMORY

DORIS LEVINE 1921 - 2010 CBT member 15 years

RON GOODMAN 1956 - 2010 CBT member 6 years

## December 2010

Tikvah Talk

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.

