

MAY HIGHLIGHTS

Rabbi Schultz encourages members to reach out to our clergy for support and understanding if they find themselves struggling in the role of caregiver to a loved one. Page 3

Alexa Cohen spotlights Rebekah Rosler, a social worker who joined the Bonim team this school year to provide support for families, teachers, staff, and children. Page 5

Ira Wise shares the importance of modeling and implementing Jewish values in every aspect of our lives, especially when faced with the stress caused by chaos. Page 7

Brad Kerner, from our own B'nai Israel Green Team, shares tips for keeping your recycling stream green. Page 9

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MEET CHELSEA FEUCHS, RABBINIC INTERN



Chelsea Feuchs, a fourth-year rabbinical student, will be joining us as a rabbinical intern for six weeks, starting in mid-May.

A native of Goldens Bridge, N.Y., Chelsea received a bachelor's degree in Judaic Studies from Brown University and lived in Jerusalem for a year before entering Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. During the academic year, she has been a 15-hour-a-week intern at Central Synagogue in Manhattan.

For many years, Chelsea, now 29, attended the Union for Reform Judaism's Crane Lake Camp in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, where she met our own Michelle Rubel and later worked as a counselor herself.

"I remember her as an awesome counselor and color war general," Chelsea said, "but I didn't realize she had gone into the cantorate. When I saw her name on the

website, I was pleasantly surprised and excited for the chance to work together."

There is one unusual accomplishment on Chelsea's resume. For two years after graduating from Brown, she worked as a labor organizer with the Massachusetts Building Trades Council, advocating for workers' rights.

As a fellow with Join for Justice, which trains community organizers, she could have signed up with a variety of worthy organizations, she said.

"But a lot of them had very imprecise metrics for how they measured success," she recalled. "And when I sat down with the person who would become my boss at the AFL-CIO, he said they measure success by the number of hours that we can get for X number of employees so they can put food on their table. And I was like, I'm sold. That's what I want to do."

"I really got a crash course education in

Continued on page 4

IN RECOGNITION OF MAY MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH:

"You, Your Family & Mental Health"

Friday, May 13 at 6:00 p.m.

Join us for a Shabbat Service with guest speaker and B'nai Israel congregant Randy Kaye. Randy is a Family to Family trainer/teacher for the National Alliance on Mental Health and author of two books: *Ben Behind His Voices* and *Happier Made Simple*. Books are available for purchase in the Temple

office at \$25 each. Shabbat dinner and discussion to follow the service. RSVP to Chris@cbibpt.org before Tuesday, May 10. Cost for dinner is \$25 per person. This event is sponsored by the CBI Mental Health, Advocacy, Support & Awareness Group.



SHARING OUR JOY...

In Celebration of:

Serena & Arnie Sher, on the engagement of granddaughter, Olivia Sher, to Matt Haas.

Sarah Tropp-Pacelli & Eric Pacelli, on the birth of daughter, Margaret Lily Tropp-Pacelli, granddaughter of **Lauren & Jonathan Tropp**

Luise Mann, on the birth of grandson, Lucas Henry, son of Adrienne Levi & Marc Rottman.

Maggie & Marc Walowitz, on the birth of granddaughter, Charli Noa Weinberg, daughter of Chloe & Zach Weinberg.

SINCERE SYMPATHY

We extend our sympathy to the bereaved families of:

Bernard Lightman, father of Michael Lightman

Dorothy Blaustein

Suzanne Cane, sister of Marjorie Freeman

Marvin Strow, father of Lisa Mallon

Gertrude Lorraine Merle, mother of Carol Merle-Fishman, grandmother of Rabbi Sarah Marion

Stanley Lessler, husband of Judith Lessler

WELCOME! WELCOME!

A warm welcome to our newest members. We look forward to their participation in our many programs and hope their affiliation will not only enrich their lives, but that of our congregation.

Philip Heyman & Sarah Gillespie-Heyman, and **Grayson**
Fairfield, CT

BULLETIN BOARD

May Mitzvah Morning — Sunday, May 1, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.
Location: B'nai Israel

For our May Mitzvah Morning, we will be making fleece isolette blankets for The Tiny Miracles Foundation, which will be distributed to local neonatal intensive care units and families of premature babies.

These precious blankets protect fragile preemies from harsh lights and sounds while adding bright color to the NICU. Having a newborn in the NICU is very



stressful for families, and with the added stress of COVID restrictions still in place, it is more important now than ever that we do everything we can to help.

This is a great, hands-on mitzvah activity for congregants of all ages. No sewing skills required! Just cutting and knotting fleece — it's easy and fun.

Making each blanket only takes about 30-40 minutes if done individually but is more fun and efficient when done as a group. All you need is a ruler and a pair of very good scissors. Some will be provided; but if you have your own, feel free to bring them.

Sign up to participate through the link in Hashavua or on the Temple website. Feel free to email Nina Silberman (ninahv@aol.com) or

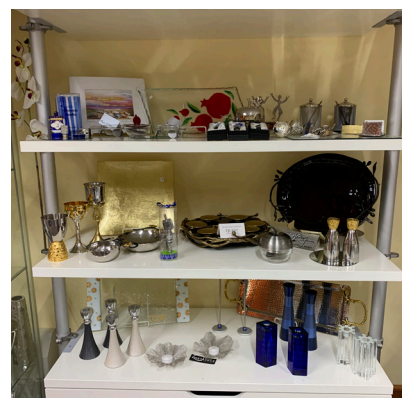
Mitch Weinstein (mitchellew@yahoo.com) with any questions.

For some background, TTMF started in 2004 as one of the first organizations to offer a range of support services in hospitals for the parents of premature babies. TTMF is a local Fairfield and New Haven County, Connecticut organization currently partnering with six area hospitals in our community. To learn more about TTMF and the amazing support they provide to families throughout Fairfield County, visit their website at ttmf.org.

Judaica shop



The Judaica boutique stocks many gifts as well as beautiful items for your home. For personal appointments please contact: Karen Sanger (203-767-0830) or Sylvia Neigher (203-895-7348)





FROM THE RABBI'S DESK/RABBI EVAN SCHULTZ

FOR OUR CAREGIVERS

In April, Rabbi Richard Address joined our congregation for Shabbat to speak on the topic of sacred aging. During his Friday afternoon session with local interfaith clergy, Rabbi Address shared some of the staggering statistics around caregiving and advanced illness in our country. A recent study, he shared, shows that a record 42 million Americans are serving as family caregivers and spending more than a quarter of their household income caring for a loved one. Rabbi Address spoke about the fact that many of these caregivers report high levels of stress and impact on their own health, as well as strain on relationships within their family.

I have certainly experienced this in my role as one of your rabbis. I find myself more often sitting with congregants who are caring for a loved one, whether it be a parent, spouse, or child. Congregants have shared how they feel lonely, tired, and spiritually and emotionally drained. Sometimes it helps just a little to know that there are many individuals and families in our community feeling many of these same stresses and pressures. That you who are caregiving for a loved one are not alone.

We, as your clergy, want to create more spaces in our community to talk to others caring for a loved one and also to nurture

the spiritual element of caregiving for a loved one. We hope in the coming months to offer more spiritual spaces to gather together: to pray, sing and support one another the best we can as you navigate the path of caregiving. Please know we're always here to talk and support you. You can call us or email us anytime. If you are going through a challenging or stressful time, please let one of us know.

I wanted to provide just a few readings to our caregivers, something that may provide you with just a bit of strength, calm, or ease at this time. These are excerpts from a book entitled, *Mishkan R'fuah, Where Healing Resides*, filled with prayers, poems and meditations around illness and healing. I am happy to send you a copy for your home or for your loved one, just let me know you'd like one — eschultz@cbibpt.org. Sending love and support to all those navigating difficult or painful trails at this time.

A Prayer for Those Who Help

May the One who blessed and led our forebearers give countenance unto those who provide help for the ill and troubled among us. May they be filled with fortitude and courage, endowed with sympathy and compassion, as they give strength to those at their side. May they fight against despair and continue to find within themselves the will to reach out to

those in need. And in their love of others, may they feel the blessing of community and the blessing of renewed faith.

Prayer for Comfort and Healing

God, Holy One of Blessing: I come before You with many feelings. I have accomplished much and yet wanted more. My acts have given love to others. My words have given encouragement and comfort. Yet, there are actions I wish I had taken, words I wish I had spoken. Some I wish I could take back. There are accomplishments I wanted to achieve but did not. I have apologized for hurts I have caused. I have forgiven others. Sometimes my feelings are clear; sometimes they are not. I pray that whatever the stirrings of my heart, they bring me closer to my true self, to my loved ones, and to You. Created by You, I seek to live ever more fully in your image. I seek peace for myself and my loved ones. At this time may my life be filled with warmth and wholeness, comfort, and healing. Amen.

Meditation on Healing

When I panic, God, teach me patience. When I fear, teach me faith. When I doubt myself, teach me confidence. When I despair, teach me hope. When I lose perspective, show me the way — back to love, back to life, back to You.

We, as your clergy, want to create more spaces in our community to talk to others caring for a loved one and also to nurture the spiritual element of caregiving for a loved one.

SHABBAT SERVICE SCHEDULE

In person on Fridays at 6:00 p.m. and Saturdays at 8:00 a.m. where indicated.
All services at this time can also be viewed on Zoom. The link is sent out in our weekly email.

Friday, May 6

5:00 p.m. Havurah — Shabbat Play & Pray
6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service — in person and on Zoom
Torah Portion — Kedoshim, Lev. 19:1-20:27
Haftarah — Amos 9:7-15

Haftarah — Ezekiel 44:15-31
7:15 p.m. Shabbat Dinner (in person — subject to change)
8:00 p.m. Conversation with Randy Kaye

Saturday, May 14

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service — in person and on Zoom
9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast — in person
9:30 a.m. Torah Study — in person and on Zoom
11:00 a.m. Bat Mitzvah of Kylie Yurdin, daughter of Rachel & Scott Yurdin

Saturday, May 21

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service — in person and on Zoom
9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast — in person
9:30 a.m. Torah Study — in person and on Zoom
9:30 a.m. Havurah — Shabbat Social
10:00 a.m. Bar Mitzvah of Alex Adwin, son of Keri Adwin and Jason Adwin

Saturday, May 7

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service — in person and on Zoom
9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast — in person
9:30 a.m. Torah Study — in person and on Zoom

Friday, May 27

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service — in person and on Zoom
Torah Portion — B'chukotai, Lev. 26:3-27:34
Haftarah — Jeremiah 16:19-17:14

Friday, May 13

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service — in person and on Zoom.
Special guest speaker — Randy Kaye: You, Your Family and Mental Health, in honor of Mental Health Awareness month.
Torah Portion — Emor, Lev. 21:1-24:23

Friday, May 20

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service — in person and on Zoom — led by BIFTY
Torah Portion — B'har, Lev. 25:1-26:2
Haftarah — Jeremiah 32:6-27

Saturday, May 28

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service — in person and on Zoom
9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast — in person
9:30 a.m. Torah Study — in person and on Zoom

MITZVAH PROJECT AIMS TO ASSIST UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

Adam Plager, grade 6, is fundraising for Global Preschool for his Mitzvah Project.

Over 100,000 Ukrainian refugees have reached the Czech Republic since the war started. There are limited free education programs for preschool children in the Czech Republic. Global Preschool, located in Prague 6, is trying to help. They would like to accommodate 15

Ukrainian children ages 3–6 and hire Ukrainian refugee teachers to teach them in Ukrainian. Global Preschool is an international preschool with a Montessori-based curriculum.

Global Preschool has already collected local donations in Prague to furnish and equip the new center, including chairs,

shelving, rugs, books, and art supplies. They are now trying to raise funds to pay the rent on their new classroom for the next six months.

You can help by following this link: <https://tinyurl.com/UkrainePreschool>.

CHELSEA FEUCHS FROM P. 1

the movement. My grandpa had been a union teacher and pretty involved in his union. I read a lot of books, and I had some incredible mentors. I really loved it.”

She added, “The guys that I worked with were wonderful. We were all working for the same mission.”

Arrangements have been made for Chelsea to stay with a B'nai Israel family, and she is looking forward to her time in Bridgeport.

“Rabbi Evan and I are still talking through what any specific projects might look like,” she said. “But one of the most exciting parts of the summer

is that I’m going to get to integrate into the community, that I’m going to get to shadow the clergy at the synagogue, and that I’m going to get a feel for what it’s like to be a rabbi full time; and that’s something I haven’t had the opportunity to experience yet.”



Save The Date

Join Us As We Honor
Rabbi Evan Schultz
on his 10th Anniversary
at Congregation B'nai Israel
Friday Evening, June 10, 2022

Special Shabbat service
followed by an outdoor evening with dinner and
musical entertainment under the tent!

More details and official invitation will be forthcoming.
Plans are under way but if you would like to help our
committee chairs, Debbie and Ted Portnay
and Tracey and Jeff Taylor, please email Debbie at
theportnays@gmail.com or Tracey at tracey@tepcom.com.

Note: originally planned for June 11 and changed to June 10

Congratulations to the Merkaz Graduating Class of 2022

Mazel Tov to Our B'nai Israel Students!

Jillian Appel	Zachary Fogelman
Brooke Berry	Ben Gassel
Alexy Berson	Adam Giglietti
Amber Borofsky	Samantha Renzulli
Becca Fink	Alexa Selter

**The 2022 Merkaz Graduation will be held
at Jewish Senior Services on
Sunday, June 12, at 5:00p.m.**

B'NAI ISRAEL PET BLESSING AND CELEBRATION

Sunday, May 22, 10:00-11:00 a.m.

B'nai Israel Parking Lot

Whether you recently adopted a dog and became a member of the "COVID puppy club" or have been a proud pet parent for quite some time, we invite you and your

beloved pet(s) to join us for a celebration of all the ways that our animals bring us comfort and joy. This is an animal-inclusive event: dogs, cats, lizards, hamsters are all invited. All animals must be leashed and/or in appropriate cages at

all times, and all animal attendees will receive a special treat to commemorate the occasion. If you plan to join, please sign up using the link in Hashavua so that we know you will be joining us.

Congratulations to our Confirmation Class of 2022

**We are thrilled to be able to join together on
Sunday, June 5 at 2:00 p.m. for our Confirmation Service**

Lillian Borofsky
Sydney Borofsky
Amelia King
Campbell Liotta
Alison Markus
Lindsay Oberhand

Reid Powning
Hannah Pressman
Benjamin Selter
Owen Simon
Alexandra Sutton
Vivian Sweedler

Gavin Wasserlauf
Lilah Weinstein
Bryce Yurdin
Maya Zubrinsky



BONIM BUZZ/ALEXA COHEN, EARLY CHILDHOOD DIRECTOR
**SPOTLIGHT ON REBEKAH ROSLER,
SCHOOL COUNSELOR/SOCIAL WORKER**



Rebekah Rosler and her family came to us from Manhattan — they moved to Fairfield in late 2020. Rebekah is an LCSW, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, who started a company in New York City called Mom MeetUps, focused on the importance of supporting women as they became moms and along their journey to and through motherhood. She began by supporting women who were struggling with fertility and continued to support them as many turned into mothers, taking one avenue or another, and throughout their early childhood years. Her practice, It's Conceivable, came with her to Fairfield, where she continues to support women, mothers, parents, and children as a therapist, doula, postpartum doula, and coach.

Rebekah joined the Bonim Preschool team at the beginning of this school year, and has been working with our children, families, and teachers as well as the synagogue staff. She meets one on one, in group settings as well as virtually and by phone to work on all the different matters that affect each of us individually. We brought her on knowing how deeply

impacted we all were by COVID and realizing how much we could all benefit from having someone available to help support us during such a challenging and overwhelming time. Rebekah works with each person on an individual basis and, as a social worker, is required to keep each and every interaction confidential. Rebekah's work has been invaluable and truly made a difference in our school and community. In a time like this, where communication is so important, Rebekah is able to give a voice to those who need extra support in communicating their feelings. She has had parents reach out directly to seek help with certain challenges (at home and at school), and in other cases sometimes teachers have requested some additional support for matters in the classroom. Rebekah has had some students she's been meeting with weekly since the beginning of the school year, and in other cases, there are one-off meetings where Rebekah will be brought in to observe when requested in order to determine the best approach to support.

She also started a parent group that has

met every Friday morning since the first week of school! Check out the photo below showing the parent group's special project creating art trays. A regular from the group shared her talent with the rest, and, in addition to the beautiful painted trays, they enjoyed bagels and a lot of laughs. The group meets right after drop-off and usually runs about an hour. This has allowed the creation of a community within our community and a wonderful safe space for regular attendees and those who just need a place to come from time to time. Some people have brought babies/kids, but often the parents just gather, talk, confide, and have a place for themselves, which we all know is pretty rare and just so important.

Rebekah will continue to work with us next school year and will continue to be available to any of us who needs an extra little bit of support.



In a time like this, where communication is so important, Rebekah is able to give a voice to those who need extra support in communicating their feelings.



FROM THE EDUCATION CENTER

IRA J. WISE, D.J.R.E., DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

IT'S ALL CHAOS. BE KIND.

It was a very tense time in my life. The reason for the stress is not important now. We were waiting to hear some news, but there was nothing more to do to affect the outcome. So, I found a comedy special on Netflix, comedian and actor Patton Oswalt's stand-up special "Annihilation." I think it is still available.

He performed this show a little more than a year after the sudden death of his wife, Michelle. And he talks about both that and the process of talking to their then seven-year-old daughter about it. It is incredibly powerful, moving, and strangely very funny.

Oswalt recounted that Michelle was an author of true-crime books. He said she hated the phrase "everything happens for a reason." She would say, "It's all chaos, it's all random, and it's horrifying. And if you want to try and reduce the horror, and reduce the chaos, be kind. That's all you can do. It's chaos. Be kind." It's all chaos. Be kind.

Her words and his story got us through that night. And I have shared it with many people.

You don't need me to tell you about the chaos. Listen to the news. Look at your



collection of masks and test kits. Ukraine. Terrorism. Cyber attacks. Politics and posturing from all sides.

What can we do?

When I meet with new teachers, I share several principles that are sacred to me. The first is "Camp is for the campers." In other words, always focus on the experience of our learners, rather than what is convenient for us. Another rule is "*Dugma* is Dogma." *Dugma Ishit* is Hebrew for "personal example." Always model the behavior you want the learners to emulate. In every moment of my life with you for the past 27 years, I have committed myself to live by the same rules I shared with our teachers. So, what can we do?

Be kind.

Over the years, we have developed our shared vision for education at B'nai Israel



– for the children in Kehilah (formerly called Religious School) as well as for learners of all ages. Together we have explored what we want our congregation to learn about, and I have tried to teach how to apply Jewish values and "all of this Jewish stuff" in every aspect of our lives, not just at select moments. I have tried to live and model the sacred principles discussed with the teachers, and the Jewish values we espouse in our new curriculum, articulate as a congregation, and hold dear as members of the Jewish people, every day of my life.

By my count, this is my 296th and final article for the B'nai Israel Temple Bulletin. And while I am moving to a new congregation in New York City, we are not completely leaving the community. I look forward to seeing many of you in days and years to come.

Take care of B'nai Israel as it has cared for us all since 1859. And take care of one another.

It's all chaos out there. All we can do is be kind.

L'shalom,

Ira



ADULT JEWISH LEARNING AT CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL

Israel Independence Day Film Festival

May 4 – 9, online according to your own schedule!

Celebrate Israel with six nights of exclusive, award-winning new films, available to view from the comfort of home via your TV, computer, or mobile devices. Your ticket provides limited-time access to this series of nine films, exclusive filmmaker discussions and more, with new content added each night of the festival. Your \$50.00 ticket includes all nine films. Go to jewishfilmfests.com to see the trailers and buy your ticket. Enter the special promo code **CBIFF** at checkout to receive a 20% discount and support Congregation B'nai Israel (a portion of your ticket price will be donated to the Sylvia Prosnit Adult Jewish Learning Fund)!



Women's Monthly Rosh Chodesh (New Moon) Gathering
Thursday, May 19
from 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Join with women from across the B'nai Israel community each month for conversation, laughter, and learning as we celebrate the start of each new moon and soak in the wisdom of our female ancestors. Women of all ages are welcome to participate.



This month our gathering will most likely take place in person. Check email and Hashavua for updates. For more information or to be added to the email list, please contact Rabbi Marion at smarion@cbibpt.org.

ONGOING CLASSES

Torah Study
Saturdays, May 7, 14, 21, and 28
from 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

The Torah is so many things to so many people: law book, guidebook, moral compass, history, mythology, genealogy, and so much more. Each week we read from the Torah. Each year at Simchat Torah we start over from the beginning. Each time we revisit a portion, we learn something new. Some of us have been learning together for decades. Some of us joined recently. All of us are teaching and learning from one another! Join us as we slowly make our way through the entire Torah! Please see Hashavua to confirm if we are meeting at temple in addition to on Zoom as well as for the link.

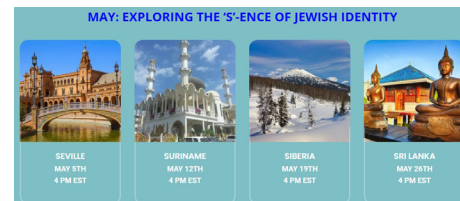


Talmud with Training Wheels
Monday, May 2, 9, 16, and 23

from 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. on Zoom

Join us for the final four sessions! For two years, a small but loyal band of adults have been exploring how Talmud and other classic Jewish texts can help us make sense of our world today. We don't always agree with them (or even with each other), but we are able to learn and wrestle with the values they teach us. Ira Wise is our guide as the group decides on topics of interest; then he finds us the texts and we dig in. No prior knowledge or political leaning is required, just a sense of adventure and a willingness to have an opinion! Please see Hashavua for Zoom info or email info@cbibpt.org for the link.

Take the Hot Air Zoom Balloon and Explore the "S"-Ence of Jewish Identity!
Thursdays, March 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31 at 4:00 p.m. on Zoom



This month we explore four places in different parts of the world whose name begins with the letter S! Come join any or all four of these amazing online tour guides organized by our friend Dani Rotstein from JewishMajorca.com. They will show you how our people's story has gone to places we might not have imagined! This month we can visit Seville, Spain (5/5), Suriname (5/12), Siberia (5/19), and Sri Lanka (5/26). There is a fee for participating. Go to <https://www.jewishmajorca.com/travel-groups/>.

FROM HUC CONNECT

<https://huc.edu/huc-connect/huc-connect-webinar-theme-view>

Sacred Land: Israel Before and After Time

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 at 2:00 p.m. ET
Ralph Gibson, *American photographer*
Martin Cohen, *producer*
Jeremy Leigh, *Coordinator of the Richard J. Scheuer Israel Seminar, HUC-JIR/Jerusalem*
Joshua Holo, *Dean, Jack H. Skirball Campus; Associate Professor of Jewish History, HUC/Los Angeles; moderator*

Journey through Israel's past and present by means of Torah text, historical context, and a camera with world-renowned, surrealist photographer, Ralph Gibson.

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ADULT JEWISH LEARNING FROM P. 8

Reparations and Jewish Thought **Tuesday, May 10, 2022** **at 2:00 p.m. ET**

Rabbi Jonathan Crane, *Raymond F. Schinazi Scholar of Bioethics and Jewish Thought at the Ethics Center, Emory University; Professor of Medicine, Emory School of Medicine; Professor of Religion, Emory College of Arts and Sciences*
Kihana Miraya Ross, *Assistant Professor of African American Studies at Northwestern University*

Andrew Rehfeld, Ph.D., *President of HUC-JIR; moderator*

There is no doubt America was built by enslaved people. Though many argue that nothing is owed to their descendants, Judaism strongly disagrees.

The Dr. Fritz Bamberger Memorial Lecture Series is sponsored by the Bamberger Family in memory of their father, Dr. Fritz Bamberger, z”l, who served as Assistant to the President and Professor of Intellectual History at HUC-JIR/New York.

Women in The Rabbinate **Tuesday, June 7, 2022 at 2:00 p.m. ET**

Rabbi Sally Pries and Rabbi Denise L. Eger, *Congregation Kol-Ami*

Fifty years after HUC-JIR ordained the first woman rabbi in America, it's time to assess progress. What have we achieved and what remains for us to accomplish?

B'NAI ISRAEL GREEN TEAM (BGT) MAY 2022

Keeping your Recycling Stream Clean by Brad Kerner

I get a lot of emails, texts, and direct messages through Instagram and Facebook about what can and can't be recycled. While I am the self-proclaimed Eco Dude, even I make mistakes and forget what can and can't be recycled in Connecticut. I have also received messages questioning the efficacy of recycling and saying that it's just not worth the effort. Yes, only 9% of all plastic used in the U.S. gets recycled. And much of the plastic put into the blue bin is not accepted into our recycling stream, such as black plastic takeout containers. Throw those into the trash! And tell your favorite local restaurants to change to white plastic take out containers.

Personally, I refuse to throw the baby out with the bathwater and take a fatalistic view of recycling. Because, when done right, recycling costs less than incinerating our garbage (yes, all our garbage is burned in CT), decreases



air and water pollution (yes, it's true... the fish we eat have micro plastics bioaccumulating in their bodies), conserves valuable resources and saves energy (i.e. sustainability), and decreases greenhouse gases that impact climate change and our health. So, join our B'nai Israel Green Team bandwagon and learn how to recycle properly. No more "wish-cycling," like throwing a glass jar of peanut butter that's not cleaned out or putting shredded paper into the bin hoping it gets recycled....because they will both end up in the trash or contaminate the recycling stream, which is one reason

why only 9% of plastics are recycled. Here are four actions you can do to help make your recycling stream clean:

- 1) Post the "What's In, What's Out" insert from this bulletin next to your recycling station as a reminder
- 2) Teach kids early to form good recycling habits
- 3) Download the RecycleCT Wizard app from your app store. Wondering if something is accepted into our recycling stream? The wizard will tell you!
- 4) Watch the webinar provided to B'nai Israel by CT DEEP's lead on recycling, Go to B'nai Israel Homepage --> Tikkun Olum --> B'nai Israel Green Team --> News You Can Use

Have questions or want to learn more about sustainability? Follow me on Instagram @The.Eco.Dude and DM me with questions.

MAY DONATIONS

(We greatly appreciate all donations to our special purpose funds.)

Rabbi Schultz Discretionary Fund

David E. Abbey, in memory of Irving Abbey.

Mark L. Abrams, in honor of Rabbi Schultz's 10th anniversary at B'nai Israel; in honor of Andrea Goodman & Jeff Ackerman, on daughter Dani's marriage, and the future marriage of their son, Michael; hoping for a speedy resolution to the war in the Ukraine.

The Greenbaum Family, in appreciation of Rabbi Schultz.

Nicole & Ryan Lestrangle, in appreciation to Rabbi Schultz for the beautiful wedding service that he performed for us.

Karen & Peter Montagna, in memory of Sharon Wilson, mother of Patti Rosenberg.

Nancy Rine & Russ Bleemer, in memory of Dorothy Blaustein.

Nancy & Jonathan Rosenthal, in memory of Bernard Lightman, father of Mike Lightman.

Rabbi Marion Discretionary Fund

Linda & Barry Diamond, in memory of Suzanne Cane, sister of Marj Freeman.

Deborah Goodman, in memory of mother, Ruth Goodman.

Laurel Greenberg, in loving memory of terrific husband, Hank Greenberg, wonderful father of Sue & Andy Greenberg.

Jon & Cleo Sonneborn, in memory of Ruth Goodman, mother of Andrea Goodman and Debbie Goodman.

Rabbi James Prosnit Legacy Fund

Marilyn S. Weinstein, in memory of mother, Sarah R. Strogoff.

Cantor Rubel Discretionary Fund

Kelle & Jeffrey Ruden, with thanks to Cantor Rubel for the Spiel.

Music Fund

Carol Barsky, in memory of father-in-law, Rubin Barsky.

Anne & Mark Kirsch, in memory of Ruth Goodman, mother of Andrea Goodman and Debbie Goodman.

Enhancement Fund

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(We greatly appreciate all donations to our special purpose funds.)

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MENTAL HEALTH, THE URJ AND B'NAI ISRAEL

By Beth Lazar

Because May is Mental Health Awareness Month and COVID has left a spike of anxiety, depression, and PTSD in its wake, I'd like to examine the issue of mental illness and the Union for Reform Judaism's (URJ) and B'nai Israel's response.

URJ adapted an 8-page document of 13 resolutions titled "Establishing a Comprehensive System of Care for Persons with Mental Illness." Resolution #2a calls upon congregations to participate in communal efforts aimed at destigmatizing mental illness.

For too long, stigma and shame have kept the reality of mental illness hidden from view. Most people are shocked to learn that 1 in 5 adults experiences a mental health condition. Stigma is a product of fear of the unknown, myths, and misinformation. I'd like to lift the veil and shed some light on this difficult condition that millions of Americans live with every day. First, some famous people have struggled with mental illness. President Abe Lincoln and the writers, Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath, had depression. The following people struggled with schizophrenia: artist Vincent Van Gogh, jazz pianist Thelonious Monk, and Nobel Prize Winner in Economics, John Nash.

A lot of people think schizophrenia means a split personality, as found in the story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, *The Many Faces of Eve* or *Sibyl*. But schizophrenia means split from reality. It's marked by hearing voices, hallucinations, and delusions – thoughts like one can fly or the TV is talking to them. Sometimes schizophrenia makes people outwardly appear catatonic.

Many people think that people with clinical depression should "snap out of

it" or "put on a happy smile and think positively." But clinical depression, like schizophrenia, is caused by the body's deficiency in the production of certain brain chemicals needed for the function of a healthy mind, just like the chronic illness of diabetes, where the body doesn't produce enough insulin. Depression is the leading cause of suicide. Forty thousand people die by suicide in the United States each year. That is the same number of people who die from breast cancer.

In the mid 1990s, the State of Connecticut closed many of its psychiatric facilities, and regular hospitals had a shortage of beds available for psychiatric patients. This led to homeless, mentally ill individuals being sucked into the criminal justice system. Drug and alcohol abuse were used as a means of self-medication, which together with loitering, disturbing the peace, and petty theft are reasons homeless, mentally ill individuals are arrested. Eighty percent of incarcerated females and twenty-five percent of incarcerated males suffer from mental health issues. Today there are 10 times as many people with mental health issues in prison rather than mental health hospitals.

The Union for Reform Judaism's resolution about mental illness #10a states, "place nonviolent mentally ill criminal offenders into community-based mental health programs and also work to ensure that persons with mental illness who are sentenced to prison receive appropriate and humane treatment, including access to appropriate medication." The Union for Reform Judaism's resolution on mental illness #2b states "work with persons with mental illness and their families so that they feel welcome within our synagogues."



MENTAL HEALTH
ADVOCACY, SUPPORT
AND AWARENESS GROUP

I feel that the clergy and staff of B'nai Israel fulfill this resolution. Both Rabbi Sarah Marion and Cantor Michelle Rubel have openly shared their mental health stories and struggles, creating an atmosphere where congregants feel more comfortable discussing their personal mental health issues. In 2019, when I had a mental health crisis, it was Rabbi Marion who helped me get an appointment at a local psych clinic. Rabbi Schultz was instrumental in helping Adam Weisblatt and me to form the CBI Mental Health Support, Awareness and Advocacy Group. One of the goals of the group is for our congregation to have an open, honest, fact-based discussion about mental illness and to begin to treat it like any other chronic illness. As the artist Vincent Van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo in 1889, "As for me, you must know I shouldn't have chosen madness if there had been any choice. What consoles me is that I am beginning to consider madness as an illness like any other and that I accept it as such."

Beth Lazar is Co-chair with Adam Weisblatt of the CBI Mental Health Support, Awareness and Advocacy Group. Statistics for this article are from CT News Junkie, CT by the Numbers, and the United States Census Bureau.



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BIFTY MAY 2022

BIFTY is looking forward to our final programs of the year. We meet on Thursday evenings from 7:15-8:45 p.m. in the BIFTY lounge. We hope to see you there!

Our May and June events are:

May 12— Celebrate Spring with BIFTY with some fun spring activities!

May 19— Join us as we send off our seniors!

June 2— Mall hunt at the Trumbull Mall! We will meet in the food court. Bring a charged phone.

On May 20, BIFTY will be leading the Friday evening Shabbat service. We hope to see you there!

For more information and to stay up to date on events, follow us on Instagram @cbi.bifty or ask to join our text group.



BIFTY had fun welcoming our 8th graders to BIFTY with a Shark Tank program!