

## MARCH HIGHLIGHTS

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Participants in a recent civil rights mission share their reflections on meaningful takeaways from their experiences on the trip. Page 5

Alexa Cohen shares news of the retirement of a great asset to B'nai Israel's Bonim and Kehilah programs, Adele Josovitz, who is to be honored at an upcoming event. Page 7-8

Scott Smith talks to Mark Nigrosh, B'nai Israel financial secretary, about the benefits of the new membership management software system, ShulCloud. Page 10

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## B'NAI ISRAEL IS EXCITED TO WELCOME RABBI MENACHEM CREDITOR AS OUR SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE MARCH 17-18!



Rabbi Menachem Creditor serves as the Pearl and Ira Meyer Scholar in Residence at UJA-Federation New York, and he is the founder of Rabbis Against Gun Violence. An acclaimed author, scholar, and speaker with over two million views of his online videos and essays, he was named by Newsweek as one of the fifty most influential rabbis in America. His 30 published books and six albums of original music include the global anthem "*Olam Chesed Yibaneh*" and the COVID-era 2-volume anthology "*When We Turned Within*." He and his wife Neshama Carlebach live in New York, where they are raising their five children. Below you'll find a few highlights of Rabbi Creditor's weekend with us:

**The Soul of Israel**  
**Friday, March 17, 8:00 p.m.**  
**(Following Shabbat Dinner)**

Jewish conversations regarding Israel often focus on geopolitics, antisemitism, anti-Zionism, and Israeli current events.

All of these necessary priorities demand attention. But what is then missing from Jewish discourse is the inspiration, the "why" behind The Jewish State, which can only partially be understood as a response to persecution. How did the founders of Political Zionism, Cultural Zionism, Religious Zionism — and others — dream? What observations might they make regarding the state of contemporary Israel's soul? Through selected writings, Rabbi Creditor will present a glimpse into the visions of Zionism's founding architects Theodore Herzl, Achad Ha'am, and Rav Kook.

Please join us that evening for Shabbat dinner! Dinner is \$20/person. Please RSVP to Susie Hallman, shallman@cbibpt.org.

**The Wisdom of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel**  
**Saturday, March 18, 9:30 a.m.**

Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972), rabbi, philosopher, and social activist, stood in solidarity with Soviet Jewry, marched with Martin Luther King, Jr. from Selma to Montgomery in 1965 for civil rights, and was the most visible Jewish voice in the anti-Vietnam War movement. Through prolific and passionate writing, teaching, and activism, he changed the face of American Judaism forever. In honor of the 50th anniversary of Heschel's passing, Rabbi Creditor will present an exploration of Heschel's writings on civil rights, religion, war and spirituality.

## 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.

**Stephen Sivakoff & daughter Vivienne** Fairfield, CT

**Dennis & Janet Magid**, Easton, CT

**Joel & Jennifer Harss and**

daughters **Addison & Emmy**, Fairfield, CT

**Colin & Emily Nissan and**

children **Julia & Elliot**, Fairfield, CT

## SHARING OUR JOY...

In celebration of:

**Brenda & Justin Kreuzer**, on the birth of their granddaughter Amelia Rose Kreuzer to parents Bruna & Neil Kreuzer.

**Linda & Michael Epstein**, on the engagement of daughter, Jill Epstein to Brian Rosenfeld.

*\*If you would like to list something in Sharing Our Joy, please email the office with any information you would like to share.*

## SINCERE SYMPATHY

We extend our sympathy to the bereaved family of:

**Ilona Guman**, mother of Chris Rocha.

## BULLETIN BOARD

### MITZVAH MORNINGS

#### March 5

For our March Mitzvah Morning event, our volunteers will be partnering with Dignity Grows, a division of the Jewish Federation of Hartford, which focuses on providing personal care and hygiene products to those in need.

On March 5, at 10:00 a.m., we will meet at B'nai Israel and will be packing individual care kits filled with products for the Dignity Grows recipients. Volunteers do not need to bring products, but rather should bring \$10 for every bag they would like to pack. Our goal is to provide as many bags as possible.

In addition to packing bags, our volunteers will learn more about the Dignity Grows program and will have the opportunity to ask questions and hear about future volunteer opportunities.

This event is appropriate for all ages and all volunteers are welcome to attend, whether they are bringing a cash donation or not.

This is a great opportunity to come together as a community and help those in need while bonding with fellow congregants. What could be better than that!

For more information, please reach out to Nina Silberman (ninahv@aol.com) or Mitch Weinstein (mitchellew@yahoo.com).

#### April Mitzvah Morning

**April 30**

**Location: B'nai Israel**

For April's Mitzvah Morning we will be making fleece isolate blankets for The Tiny Miracles Foundation. The blankets will then be distributed to local neonatal intensive care units and families of premature babies.

These blankets protect fragile preemies from the harsh lights and sounds of the hospital, while adding bright color to the NICU. Having a newborn in the NICU is very stressful for families and newborns, but these blankets help alleviate that stress while providing comfort when it is needed most.

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.

If you have good scissors, please bring them to the event. If not, some will be provided.

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.

### JUDAICA SHOP

Passover is right around the corner! The first seder is Wednesday, April 5. We will be fully stocked by the beginning of March with all your Passover needs. Please contact the temple office to set up an appointment.





FROM THE RABBI'S DESK/RABBI EVAN SCHULTZ

## THE LIGHTER FARE: THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A KIBBITZ AND A SCHMOOZE?

### The Lighter Fare: The Difference between a Kibbitz and a Schmooze?

As the Jewish saying goes, “Be happy, it’s Adar!” Adar, of course, is the month in which we celebrate the festival of Purim, this year on March 6 (hope you’ll all join for our incredibly fun *Encanto* Purimspiel!). As it’s a lighter and sillier time of year, I thought I’d have some fun with my bulletin space this month to answer a deep, rabbinic question that came up in Torah study just a few weeks ago: What’s the difference between a kibbitz and a schmooze? Are they the same? Different? Long lost cousins? The answer might not be what you expect!

#### Kibbitz

I begin with a story. Back in 2017, I attended the URJ Biennial in Boston, Massachusetts. Chaired by our very own Luise Mann, the experience of joining together with thousands of Reform Jews from across the country was invigorating. As I was walking to one of my sessions, I noticed one of the rooms labeled “Kibbitz Room.” I walked in, curious. I needed to know more. What was this kibbitz room? What does it mean to dedicate an entire room to the art of the kibbitz?

Historically, in fact, the term kibbitz has had a fairly negative connotation. Kibbitz, according to the *Yiddish Slang Dictionary*, simply means “giving

unwanted advice.” But they expand by adding that while it originally was meant to converse idly, “in the United States it grew to have the negative connotation of giving unwanted advice, usually about someone’s card game. A kibbitzer is a gossip.”

Similarly, *Macmillan Dictionary* says to kibbitz is to “watch and make annoying comments about something that someone is doing.” According to the Daily Writing Tips, “In Yiddish, it’s spelled kibets, and it’s related to the Hebrew “*kibbutz*” or “collective.” But it can also mean verbal joking, which after all is a collective activity. It didn’t originally mean giving unwanted advice about someone else’s game — that’s an American innovation.

#### Schmooze

Schmooze is also a Yiddish word. According to an article in My Jewish Learning, schmooze means to chat, make small talk, converse about nothing in particular. It’s essentially the Seinfeld of the Yiddish language. However, schmoozing also has its negative connotations. According to the *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, to schmooze means: “to converse informally or to chat in a friendly and persuasive manner, especially so as to gain favor, business, or connections.”

The *Cambridge Dictionary* defines schmooze as “talking informally with someone, especially in a way that is not sincere or to win some advantage for yourself”: *He spent the entire evening schmoozing with the senator.*

So, what is the difference between the kibbitz and the schmooze? Seemingly not much. What’s your take on it? Perhaps we need a new term that incorporates both words. How about schmibbitzing? Or kibboozing? That certainly would be a memorable experience. “What were you twoschmibbitzingaboutoverthere?” “We were schmibbitzing about the difference between a kibbitz and a schmooze of course!”

Wishing you all a very joyous and happy month of Adar and a very celebratory Purim!



## PURIM AT B'NAI ISRAEL

Monday, March 6 at 5:00 p.m.

Join us in our B’nai Israel *casita* as we celebrate Purim with Mirabel and the whole Madrigal Family from the hit Disney movie *Encanto*! Our B’nai Israel social hall will be transformed into a Colombian paradise with pizza, crafts, and games for the whole family. *If you plan to join us for pizza dinner, please be sure to RSVP by going to ShulCloud and clicking on Events, or*

*by emailing Ilene Feuerberg at ifeuerberg@cbibpt.org no later than Friday, March 3.* Then, from 6:00–6:45 p.m., we will join our B’nai Israel Purim Players for our “We Don’t Talk About Haman” Purim service and *schpiel*! It will be an event you won’t want to miss! A Zoom (webinar) link for the *schpiel* will be provided for those who wish to watch online. See flyer on page 4.



*Open to all ages!*

Congregation B'nai Israel  
Presents:

# We Don't Talk About Haman

An  
Encanto  
Purim

Monday, March 6

5:00-6:00pm: Pizza Dinner, Games and Crafts

6:00-6:45pm: "We Don't Talk About  
Haman" Purim Schpiel







## FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY/RABBI SARAH R. MARION CIVIL RIGHTS MISSION REFLECTIONS

*From January 8-10, nine B'nai Israel congregants joined with Rabbi Schultz and Rabbi Marion on the Jewish Federation of Greater Fairfield County's Civil Rights Mission. Their stops in Atlanta, Montgomery, Selma, and Birmingham allowed them to see, witness, experience, and pay tribute to key moments from the Civil Rights Movement. Below are some reflections from our congregants who participated in the experience:*

Our tour guide left us with a powerful message: "We need to get comfortable with being uncomfortable." Educate yourself; ask the hard questions; really listen to the answers. Textbooks have not fully explained the Civil Rights Movement. We were so gifted to hear Civil Rights survivors tell their story on their turf. With pain in their eyes, yet fight in their spirit, they told us our battle is not over. And it is our battle. Because when one person rises to their full potential, we all do. We met Martha, a Civil Rights survivor. We had dinner at her restaurant. She overcame her mental health issues and with a small loan and lots of chutzpah became owner of a successful business and raised four children she is immensely proud of. Our struggles may not be like Martha's but our values cross close paths. Both faiths share commitment to family, community, and equality. And each one of us can contribute to that. In whatever way it presents itself. It doesn't have to be big gestures.

~ Maggie Walowitz

### **Learning and Listening with Miss Lynda: Reflections on the Jewish Federation's Civil Rights Trip**

The Jewish Federation of Fairfield County organized a trip for 50 local Jews to go to Georgia and Alabama to learn about the Civil Rights Movement. At the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church, we heard the inspiring Senator Reverend Raphael Warnock preach. Ambassador Andrew Young told us about his work and friendship with Dr. Martin Luther King. In Montgomery and Birmingham, we went to

four emotionally intense museums: the first national memorial for victims of lynching, The Legacy Museum, which explores the evolution of racial oppression from slavery to mass incarceration, The Rosa Parks Museum, and The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. But of all the places we visited and all the people we met, it was Miss Lynda of Selma Alabama who had the greatest impact on me.

Lynda Blackman Lowery was the youngest person on the march from Selma to Montgomery that resulted in the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Lynda said "My mom died because she had Black skin. She needed blood but the 'Whites only' hospital refused to help her and the Black Hospital with a supply of 'Black blood' was 90 miles away." When her mother died, seven-year-old Lynda vowed, "I will do whatever I need to do to make sure no other child will be without a mommy."

When Lynda was 13 years old, Dr. Martin Luther King came to town and spoke about "change through steady, loving confrontation to obtain voting rights and end segregation." At 13, Lynda didn't fully understand it, but she was enthusiastically "all in and ready for 'steady, loving confrontation', " that is, non-violent civil disobedience.

It was a children's campaign because if Black adults marched and were jailed, their white bosses and white landlords would fire and evict them. Lynda laughed when she told us, "I'm a real jail bird! I went to jail nine times before my 14th birthday!" When Lynda was 14, an unarmed Civil Rights activist, a Black man named Jimmie Lee Jackson was shot by police and died from his wounds. The Black people of Selma and surrounding towns were outraged and planned to march from Selma to the Alabama Capitol in Montgomery to demand justice for Jimmie Lee and voting rights.

This march was led by John Lewis on

Sunday March 7, 1965, but did not get very far. When they reached the Edmond Pettus Bridge, they were met by state and local police wearing gas masks pointing billy clubs and rifles at them. There was also a mob of white people with Confederate flags shouting threats and racial slurs. The only thing Lynda remembers after that was the smell and sting of tear gas and the look of pure, ugly hatred on the policeman's face as he beat her. The next thing she knew, she woke up on a stretcher needing 35 stitches on her face and head. That march became known as "Bloody Sunday." Decades later, she saw news film footage showing that the police had beaten her down, then kicked her so hard that her body flew up into the air.

After Bloody Sunday, Reverend Dr. King came back to Selma and organized a new march, this time with permits and protection from the federal government. The permits allowed for thousands of people to gather in Selma and Montgomery, but only 300 people were permitted to do the five-day march between Selma and Montgomery. Lynda made history by being one of the 300 people to do the full march. She was the youngest marcher, turning 15 years old on the Road to Freedom.

Lynda thinks there's still a lot that needs changing. She said of the video of George Floyd's murder: "The same look of pure hatred that was on the face of the cop who murdered George Floyd was on the face of the cop who beat me." The 1965 Voting Rights Act was gutted by the Supreme Court in 2013 and now voter suppression is rampant. If Lynda and thousands of other Black people put their bodies on the line for the right to vote and end segregation, I must fight to end voter suppression and racism.

~ Beth Lazar

*Continued on page 9*



ALEXA COHEN/DIRECTOR OF THE EDUCATION CENTER

## A SPOTLIGHT ON ADELE JOSOVITZ AND STREAM AT BONIM!



Bonim Preschool and the Education Center have chosen to honor Adele Josovitz at our Spring Celebration on April 29th. Adele is retiring (once again) after over five years supporting the children of B'nai Israel.

The success of the STREAM (Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) program would not have been possible without Adele Josovitz.

Adele came to Bonim after a 40-year career in the Fairfield Public Schools where she taught grades 1-12. Eighteen of her forty years were spent as a library/media specialist. Adele holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education and three master's degrees in reading, library/media and an eclectic mix of other categories that make her the phenomenal educator she is today. In addition to her traditional education, Adele furthers her knowledge by being a world traveler, beekeeper, and gardener. About her beekeeping, Adele says she is "saving the world, one bee at a time." Adele enjoys vegetable gardens and pollinator gardens and raises monarch and swallowtail butterflies. It's no wonder Adele likes gardening so much; she actually grew up on a 55-acre chicken farm in New Jersey where they raised 70,000 chickens. Adele talks fondly of her friends whose parents also ran farms:



one a tree farm, while another family had a vegetable farm, etc.

Bonim and B'nai Israel have been so lucky to have Adele as one of our educators. Adele and her family (husband, Robert and son Sam as well as daughters, Rachel and Doris) are long-time B'nai Israel members. Adele said she and Robert chose B'nai Israel because they wanted a special place to educate their kids



and B'nai Israel's mission fit with their family's beliefs. Although their mom is a farmer at heart, Adele's children chose very different careers, fashion design for Doris, social work for Rachel, and self-employed jack-of-all-trades for Sam.

You may ask, how does this all equate to STREAM at BONIM? Adele told me that her original love of science began during the years she taught 4th grade. Adele loved her class so much she asked the principal of her school if she could keep those kids and teach 5th grade (a term known as looping in the education world). That is where the science bug "bit" her. When Adele starting teaching science and social studies to her 5th graders, her goal was to make science exciting. She wanted the kids to love science. So, when Adele retired from the public schools, she was looking for a new adventure, which

she found in the STREAM program at Bonim. Teaching science to preschoolers and toddlers is a bit different than teaching it to 5th graders, so Adele did (and continues to do) a great deal of research, combing the internet constantly to make sure the curriculum fits the students at our school. Adele said that before she can teach a new concept to the kids, she first has to learn it herself. When she began, she admits she tried to pack too much into the short time she had with the kids. However, after much communication with the teachers and observation herself, Adele now has the formula down pat.

The goal of the STREAM program is for each lesson to build on the next. Adele calls what she does with the kids "scientific magic." The mission statement for the STREAM program is: Building a foundation for each child's future through creativity, problem solving, resourcefulness, teamwork, and curiosity. In short, Adele Josovitz is AMAZING and we are all so lucky to have her on our team.



*Continued on page 7*



Below you will find some quotes from the Bonim teachers Adele works with each day:

- “Her love of teaching children to ask questions, discover, and make mistakes is what makes Adele truly special.”
- “The STREAM program at Bonim Preschool is an asset, as is Adele herself. While the program itself educates children and fosters curiosity about how our world works, Adele herself is the real gem.”
- “We are so incredibly fortunate to have STREAM at Bonim led by Mrs. Josovitz! The program helps set our preschool apart from the rest, and it takes the children’s learning through play to another level.”
- “Adele’s energy and enthusiasm is infectious.”
- “She goes above and beyond to make sure that every child in each age group has an experience they will remember. It’s obvious that Adele loves teaching our children.”



As if that is not enough, when Adele heard that Kehilah was in need of a 1st grade (Kitah Alef) teacher, she stepped up, and now you can find Adele at Kehilah every Sunday teaching a very lucky group of six-year-olds. Although Adele did not have a background in religious education, she rolled up her sleeves and dug in to research curriculum and materials for her new adventure.

To the right you will find some photos of Adele in action!

## 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, March 3

- 5:00 p.m. Shabbat Play & Pray
- 6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom
- Torah Portion – Tetzaveh, Exodus 27:20-30:10
- Haftarah – Samuel 15:1-34

- 9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast – in person
- 9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person and on Zoom

- 9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person and on Zoom with Scholar in Residence, Rabbi Menachem Creditor

### Saturday, March 4

- 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, March 10

- 6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom
- Torah Portion – Ki Tisa, Exodus 30:11-34:35
- Haftarah – Ezekiel 36:16-38

### Friday, March 17

- 6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – with Scholar in Residence, Rabbi Menachem Creditor - in person and on Zoom, followed by a Shabbat Dinner (see weekly email for details)
- Torah Portion – Vayak’hel-Pekudei, Exodus 35:1-40:38
- Haftarah – Ezekiel 45:16-46:18
- 7:00 p.m. The Soul of Israel – talk with special guest speaker Rabbi Menachem Creditor

### Friday, March 24

- 6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom
- Torah Portion – Vayikra, Leviticus 1:1-5:26
- Haftarah – Isaiah 43:21-44:23

### Saturday, March 25

- 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. Bar Mitzvah of Daniel Hittleman son of Adam Hittleman & Michelle Serlin

### Saturday, March 11

- 8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom

### Saturday, March 18

- 8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom
- 9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast – in person

# MARCH DONATIONS

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

## **Rabbi Schultz Discretionary Fund**

**Vernon & Meredith Domm**, in appreciation to Rabbi Schultz and Rabbi Marion for the fine work they do at B'nai Israel and leading the synagogue through challenging times.

**Michael & Linda Epstein**, in memory of Chris Rocha's mother, Ilona Guman.

**Aleksey & Raisa Ledvich**, in memory of grandmother, Sara Goldenfarb; in memory of grandfather, Eli Goldshteyn; in memory of grandmother, Feiga Vengerovskaya; in memory of aunt, Shelya Sotnik.

**Carol & Andrew Lubin**, a donation.

**Chris Markley**, in memory of Martha Markley.

**Beth & Randy Reich & Family**, in memory of our fathers and grandfathers, Harry Burchman, Sidney Loewith Goldstein, and Stanley Reich.

## **Rabbi Marion Discretionary Fund**

**Vernon & Meredith Domm**, in appreciation to Rabbi Schultz and Rabbi Marion for the fine work they do at B'nai Israel and leading the synagogue through challenging times.

**Eric & Ruth Gross**, in memory of Ilona Guman, mother of Chris Rocha.

**Jack Kadden**, in memory of Ilona Guman, mother of Chris Rocha.

**Carol & Andrew Lubin**, a donation.

## **Rabbi James Prosnit Legacy Fund**

**Luise Mann**, In loving memory of Herbert Mann.

**Marilyn S. Weinstein**, in memory of my husband, Dr. Norman Weinstein.

## **Rabbi James Prosnit Discretionary Fund**

**Ellen Sheiman**, with thanks to Rabbi Prosnit for leading the funeral service for my brother-in-law, Stuart Sheiman.

## **Music Fund**

**Laurie Greenberg**, in honor of The Kurtz-Cross family.

**Anne & Mark Kirsch**, in celebration of the birth of Jeff Ackerman and Andrea Goodman's grandson Benjamin.

**Luise Mann**, in celebration of Alison and Zachary's marriage.

## **Enhancement Fund**

**Barbara Berkowitz**, in loving memory of my sister, Carole Toss.

**Dale & Jerome Demner**, in loving memory of Bertha Greenfield, mother of Dale Demner; in loving memory of Dale's Aunt Lillian Slive; in memory of Phyllis Goldstein, good friend of Dale & Jerry Demner.

**Barbara Kauders**, Mazel tov on the engagement of Linda and Michael Epstein's daughter Jill.

**Carol & Andrew Lubin**, a donation.

**Luise Mann**, in memory of Chris Rocha's mother, Ilona Guman.

**Debora & Michael Weisman**, in memory of mother Mary Frauwirth, of father Max Frauwirth, and of sister Nancy Frauwirth.

## **Sylvia Prosnit Adult Education Fund**

**Amy Madwed**, on behalf of Ruth Madwed, in memory of her son Steven.

## **Bonim Preschool Enrichment Fund**

**Serena & Arnold Sher**, in memory of Lloyd Albin, grandfather and father.

## **Rabbi Martin Library Fund**

**Samuel Miller & Family**, in memory of Harriet Kot Miller.

**Barbara Rifkin**, in memory of my brother, Daniel Postol.

## **Religious School Enrichment Fund**

**Carol & Andrew Lubin**, a donation.

## **Rabbi Arnold Sher Social Action Fund**

**Carson & Robert Berkowitz**, in memory of Belle Radam, mother of Janice Katz, grandmother of Matthew Katz; in memory of Ilona Guman, mother of Chris Rocha.

**David Abbey & Deborah Goodman**, in memory of Ilona Guman, mother of Chris Rocha.

**Samuel Miller**, in memory of Zelda Miller.

**Serena & Arnold Sher**, in memory of Harriet Miller, beloved wife of Samuel Miller; in memory of Ilona Guman, beloved mother of Chris Rocha; in memory of Anita Pearlman, sister of Elaine Friedman.

## **Vision Loan Reduction Fund**

**Ellen Sheiman**, in memory of Ilona Guman, mother of Chris Rocha.

## **Gillette Judaic Enrichment Fund**

**Alan & Joan Newman**, in memory of Kenn Horowitz, brother of Jerry Horowitz.

## **Yakhani Caring Fund**

**Janet Jurow**, in celebration of the birth of Benjamin Capuano, grandson of Andrea Goodman and Jeff Ackerman.

## **High Holy Day Appeal**

Judith Lessler



Courage, determination, endured  
atrocities, spirit, sharing, purpose, action,  
and always hope  
Living history — Ambassador Young,  
Miss Martha, Miss Linda, Bishop Wood  
Heroes — named and unnamed  
So many questions.....  
Steel slabs commemorating thousands of  
victims lynched. Tears, feeling ashamed,  
depressing. How can this happen in this  
beautiful democracy?  
Would I have had Rosa Park's courage?  
Walking, marching, dying in Selma all to  
obtain the right to vote, a privilege I take  
for granted.  
Humming Debbie Friedman — "Not by  
might and not by power, but by spirit  
alone shall we all live in peace."  
Bishop Woods challenging us — "What  
do you want? How much do you want it?  
Keep on walking, talking, marching up to  
freedom's land. Right to do right. Having  
you there makes a difference. You are a  
light."  
The people whose stories we heard along  
the way: Miss, Martha, Miss Linda,  
Bishop Woods, Ambassador Young.  
Miss Linda's tears as she remembered  
walking over the Edmund Pettus

Bridge as a 15-year-old and tearing up  
remembering George Floyd.  
The stories — Emotional, inspirational,  
appalling, heart-wrenching, and  
heartwarming.  
Pride in our congregation and  
movement. Dedicated to social justice,  
part of the core of who we are but  
So many questions, not so many  
answers, a call to action, but what and  
how.  
Billy reminding us, don't do what  
you think should be done, ask what is  
needed.  
Does our history of oppression give us  
the right to walk in our Black friends'  
shoes? Feeling our empathy falls short.  
An urgency to continue the work of those  
who came before us for equality for all,  
no matter the color of someone's skin or  
heritage.  
Grounded in Torah, Tzedek, Tzedt,  
Tirdof; justice, justice you shall pursue.  
~ Luise Mann

## Reflections on Civil Rights Mission

Sunday — Ebenezer Church -  
Hearing Senator Reverend Warnock preach  
was an amazing, inspiring experience.  
And I mean an experience. It was such a  
warm & welcoming experience.

It is soul cleansing & political & musical &  
swaying & dancing & clapping.  
It is bold colors & leopard prints & big,  
beautiful hats. And stories.

Stories about the haves & the have nots.  
And the evils of overabundance. Of equal  
rights & unfair treatment & faith in God &  
community & the hard truth.

And then more & more music. The choir  
& soloists were captivating & theatrical &  
moving. Constantly moving.

I left with tears in my eyes. It was a big,  
beautiful experience.

~ Mindy Siegel

## B'NAI ISRAEL TAKES NEW YORK CITY!

"I'll Have What She's Having: The Jewish Deli"  
at the New York Historical Society  
Sunday, April 2, 2023

Bus leaves B'nai Israel at 9:15 a.m.; returns approximately 4:00 p.m.

Join us for a one-hour private guided group tour of "I'll Have What She's  
Having: The Jewish Deli" at the New York Historical Society.

The tour will take place from 11:15 a.m.–12:15 p.m., followed by lunch  
on your own on the Upper West Side. Bus will leave Upper West Side at  
approximately 2:30 p.m. and return to B'nai Israel at 4:00 p.m.

Cost of trip is \$70 per person — includes cost of bus and admission to  
museum. Limited to 40 participants.

Please RSVP to Susie Hallman, shallman@cbibpt.org.



## Save the Date

**Women's  
Passover Seder  
March 26<sup>th</sup>  
4:00–6:00 p.m.**

Check email and  
Hashavua for  
more information!

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# SHULCLOUD SYSTEM BENEFITS CONGREGANTS AND CONGREGATIONS

By Scott L. Smith

The early returns on ShulCloud, the new Congregation B'nai Israel membership management software system that went live in August, are very encouraging.

"We are seeing a lot of positives," said temple Financial Secretary Mark Nigrosh, who along with Perry Molinoff helped guide selection and implementation of the cloud-based system. "Many of the tasks performed by our office staff are now more streamlined and take less time to complete. Additionally, we are seeing cost savings by doing things like emailing monthly statements, instead of printing and sending them through the U.S. mail. All that said, we are still working through the learning curve, and we hope to improve more processes to further simplify some of the day-to-day office staff activities."

The bigger question for our congregants is: Ask not what ShulCloud can do for B'nai Israel; ask what ShulCloud can do for you.

"The online portal is much easier to use and has more features than our old one,"

Mark said. "Congregants can view their balances, pay annual contributions and other fees, set up automatic recurring payments, make donations, view family yahrzeits, and the congregation directory."

In essence, ShulCloud makes it easier to be a member of B'nai Israel. It certainly makes life easier and more cost-effective for the synagogue.

"The biggest impact so far is in cost savings," Mark said. "The annual cost for the new system is slightly higher than our old system, but we are more than making up for that in reduced mailing costs alone. We are also now able to more easily track our incoming cash flow from annual contributions and other donations."

There is much more to come.

"There are additional system features that we expect to begin using this year," Mark said. "There is a school module that can be used by both Bonim and Kehillah. We have just scratched the surface there, and we are looking to do more. Also, the system can manage event

registrations, including payments when applicable — think dinners, lectures, and social events."

Yet, you are the ones who can benefit most right now.

"One of the main benefits is the ability for congregants to review their annual contribution amounts and other fees," Mark said. "People can choose to make a one-time payment or schedule them to be made automatically via credit card or ACH directly from their bank account. This also saves the office staff valuable time by not having to handle checks and manually update the system for each payment."

That gives the office staff more time to help you with your ShulCloud questions.

"Tremendous thanks go to our wonderful staff members, who have spent many hours learning the system," Mark said. "We all hope you have been on our ShulCloud site, but if you haven't already done so, log on and check it out. If needed, please contact the office to get or reset your user ID and password."

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## The Benefits of ShulCloud

### Key Features

- View your balance
- Pay annual contributions and other fees
- Set up automatic recurring payments
- Make donations
- View family yahrzeits
- Access the congregation directory

### Pay at Your Pace

- Choose your schedule for making payments (a one-time annual payment, quarterly, or monthly).
- Set up automated payments via credit card or ACH payments directly from your bank account.

### For More Information

- Visit ShulCloud via the Member Login section at [www.cbibpt.org](http://www.cbibpt.org)
- Call the office for help or with questions at (203) 336-1858



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## MY OWN PERSONAL WORLDS THEORY BY B'NAI ISRAEL PRESIDENT, SUSAN WALDEN



I am always up for a good Seinfeld reference. And lately, the one that reflects my life the most is the “Worlds Theory”. When George’s “worlds collide,” things blow up. But as I lean into my own personal Worlds Theory, something magical happens.

My work with ADL and my work as president of our congregation have provided me with a wonderful opportunity to blend my two worlds. By bringing ADL Kulanu to our synagogue, I have seen first-hand that when you combine your passions, it can be a very positive thing. I certainly learned this last month when, at our first Kulanu meeting, we had 33 members present; currently, our committee guided by Jeff Madwed and Andrea Ruskin, is

comprised of 40 congregants eager to learn and to make a difference. Having my colleague Jake Joseph visit our synagogue on Shabbat last month — to share his story about coming to work for ADL as an ally and joining me on a panel to discuss antisemitism — also combined my passion for confronting antisemitism with synagogue leadership. It was by far one of the highlights of my time as a Jewish leader so far. Seeing the concerned faces and hearing the questions of those present made me proud to be your president and proud to work for the ADL, where we strive to create change daily.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share my two worlds with you, proving that when they collide,

great things can happen. I firmly believe it is our responsibility to reach out and share stories about our Jewish journey and *especially* about antisemitism. Our allies need to understand who we are, and we need to be proud of who we are. Antisemitism is more than a statistic. It affects real people, and it hurts the Jewish people.

Please continue sharing your stories with me and look for more ADL Kulanu programs coming soon. I am immensely grateful to all of my ADL colleagues, but especially Jodi Mantell and Jennifer Wallis who are also B’nai Israel members, and Jake Joseph, not a B’nai Israel member, but a member of First Church Fairfield — they are working with me to help make our world a better place.

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## A LOOK AT FACTS & MYTHS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

Before the 1970’s, people avoided talking about the “C” word: that’s C for Cancer, particularly breast cancer. It used to be hush-hush and shameful. Nowadays, people talk about the need for mammograms on the radio, TV, and social media. There are all kinds of big fundraisers for cancer research and cancer survivors such as marches, telethons, and the local Swim Across the Sound.

I would like to see the same level of funding and public support for mental illness research and mental health services as there is for breast cancer research and services. Why do people hesitate to ask for help or admit that they or someone in their family is seeing a psychiatrist or taking psychiatric medicine? The feeling that these discussions are taboo probably stems from the stigma created by negative myths perpetrated by politicians, the media, and society at large.

**Myth:** People with mental illness are the cause of the high rate of gun violence in the U.S.

**Fact:** The rate of mental illness is similar worldwide, yet Western Europe does NOT have a high rate of gun violence because it has stricter gun safety laws.

**Myth:** People with mental illness are violent criminals, sociopaths, monsters.

**Fact:** According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, people with mental illness are two and a half times more likely than the general population to be victims of violent crime and seven times more likely to be raped.

**Myth:** People who have a diagnosis of depression are just lazy, lack motivation, or are spiritually bankrupt and should “just snap out of it.”

**Fact:** Clinical depression is caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain. Just like a diabetic needs insulin, a person with clinical depression needs medication. They cannot “just snap out of it.”

B’nai Israel’s Mental Health Group wants to create an atmosphere in which

B’nai Israel members can honestly and openly discuss mental health and mental illness. We are sponsoring a Mental Health Shabbat on May 5th.

**Save the Date: May 5, 2023, Mental Health Shabbat**

Friday night, May 5, services will feature a mental health professional speaking about depression and anxiety. The speaker will also give a talk following dinner at the temple that evening. You are invited to bring friends and family.

The B’nai Israel Mental Health Group meets once a month on Zoom. See weekly Hashavua emails to learn more about the May 5 Mental Health Shabbat and to find times and Zoom links for the Mental Health Group monthly meetings. We hope to see you!

By Beth Lazar

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## BIFTY MARCH 2023



It's never too late to join BIFTY! BIFTY is B'nai Israel's high school youth group. We meet on Thursdays from 7:00–8:30 p.m. in the BIFTY Lounge. Our March events will be held on:

March 9 | March 16 | March 30

We will be having our annual sleepover from Friday, March 24–Saturday, March 25. Dinner and snacks will be provided. For more information on the sleepover and on other upcoming events, ask a member to add you to our text group and follow us on Instagram @cbi.bifty.

Please reach out to advisor Marisa with any questions at [munderberger@gmail.com](mailto:munderberger@gmail.com).

*We look forward to seeing you at our next event!*

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at (203) 336-1858.

As of April 1, there will be a price increase. We are raising plot and care fees which will keep our pricing in line with other cemeteries in the area.

## OUR SUSTAINABLE TU B'SHEVAT SHABBAT DINNER

By Michelle Serlin

The Green Team cohosted a sustainable Tu B'Shevat Shabbat dinner for Kehilah families on Jan 27. The dinner highlighted three areas that can significantly reduce waste and our carbon footprint.

A vegetarian meal was served because vegetarian food requires less water and energy to produce. We avoided single use disposable plates, utensils, and plastic tablecloths, and opted instead to use B'nai Israel's reusable linens, plates, utensils, and glasses. The linens and plates made the event feel fancier while at the same time creating a lot less waste. At the end of the night, all the food waste was collected to be composted to show how easy composting is. Food waste typically makes up 20-30% of household waste, and we were able to inform

attendees about options for composting such as curbside composting and free composting at the Town of Fairfield transfer station.

In addition, the kids decorated a Tu

B'Shevat tree with leaves that displayed ways that they can help the environment. We hope that this dinner will serve as a model of how we can make future events at B'nai Israel more sustainable.





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