

## FEBRUARY HIGHLIGHTS

Rabbi Schultz offers us ways to respond to the horrific events of October 7 with our hands, heart, and head.  
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Cantor Harris shares the messages of Naomi Shemer's music and how it has captured the emotions of the country of Israel.  
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## SAVE THE DATE

Join us for the Installation of



**CANTOR  
SCOTT  
HARRIS**

FRIDAY

**15.MARCH** 6 PM - 9:30 PM

With Special Guest

**DAN  
NICHOLS**



**CONGREGATION  
B'NAI ISRAEL**

Bridgeport, CT

6 PM - KABBALAT SHABBAT

7:30 PM - SHABBAT DINNER

8:30 PM - SONG SESSION

## REPRO SHABBAT

February 9, 2024

**6:00 p.m.** Shabbat Service with Guest Speaker Alannah Boyle,  
National Council of Jewish Women

**7:15 p.m.** Shabbat Dinner

**8:15 p.m.** Program and Discussion with Alannah Boyle

Information for this event continues on the bottom half of page 9.

## 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.

**Israel & Paula Hersh**  
Fairfield, CT

**Vernon & Meredith Dommu**  
Fairfield, CT

## SINCERE SYMPATHY

We extend our sympathy to the bereaved families of:

**Charles Wahrheit**, father of Kristen Wahrheit Bresler

**Louise Plaige Widdows**, mother of Karen Widdows

**Arlene Bogner-Beauchemin**, mother of Jake Bogner, grandmother of Sophie Bogner-Beauchemin

**Judy Bart**

## SHARING OUR JOY

In Celebration of:

**Lori and Ken Berger**, on the birth of their granddaughter Cecilia (Cece) Marks Brandt, daughter of Darcy and Aaron Brandt.

**Naomi Schaffer and Roger Jackson**, on the birth of their grandson, Liam Joseph, son of William and Lindsay Schaffer.

## BULLETIN BOARD

### MITZVAH MORNING February 11, 2024

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

On February 11 at 10:00 a.m., we will meet at B'nai Israel to pack individual care kits filled with products for Dignity Grows recipients. Volunteers do not need to bring products, but rather should bring \$5 for every bag they would like to pack. This event is appropriate for all ages, and all volunteers are welcome to attend, whether they are able to donate the funds for a bag or not.

Our goal is to provide as many products and fill as many bags as possible.

In addition to packing bags, our volunteers will learn more about the Dignity Grows program and will have

a chance to ask questions and hear about future volunteer opportunities.

This is a great opportunity to come together as a community to help those in need right in our backyard while bonding with your 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).

### More about Dignity Grows:

Dignity Grows empowers our neighbors in need by providing menstrual and hygiene supplies for everybody who needs them. We remove obstacles to better self-esteem and health by providing personal hygiene essentials each and every month.

Dignity Grows mobilizes volunteers to organize, assemble, and distribute free, reusable zipper-top totes filled with a month's supply of soap, shampoo, deodorant, and a toothbrush and toothpaste along with menstrual products or shaving cream and razor kits. Federal

grant programs don't cover these items, and people often don't think to donate them to food pantries.

Dignity Grows was started in 2019 in Greater Hartford, and it's now a national initiative chaired by its founder, Jessica Zachs. Over 40,000 Dignity Grows Totes have been distributed across our region so far!

### JUDAICA BOUTIQUE

The Gift Boutique carries many unique and beautiful Judaica items. For hours of operation, please contact the temple office.



## SCAM ALERT

**If you receive a request from any member of our clergy or board to "do an errand" or "purchase gift cards," this is a scam. Please disregard the request and report it to the Cybersecurity Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) at CISA.gov.**



FROM THE RABBI'S DESK/RABBI EVAN SCHULTZ

## RESPONDING WITH HEAD, HANDS, AND HEART

Four months ago, our lives were upended. A Shabbat morning, each week reserved for joy, was met with unimaginable tragedy. I know many of us try to get back to our lives, but some days it can feel nearly impossible. The war between Israel and Hamas rages on. As of the writing of this article, hostages remain in captivity in Gaza. Anti-Israel rhetoric is shouted from the streets of our cities and our college campuses. I know so many of us remain on edge, fearful about how all of this will continue to play out in the weeks and months to come, while also still grieving the losses of October 7.

As I learned from Dr. Betsy Stone, fear can take on different forms. There is low grade fear — perhaps a hesitancy when walking into synagogue or noticing a car in the street that looks suspicious or unfamiliar. Many Jews, because of our history, have been conditioned to live with a sense of fear. Some of us, too, have intense moments of fear, perhaps when we see a Jewish college student harassed on campus, or when Hamas launches another round of rocket attacks on Israel.

Grief also takes on different forms. It is not a linear process, but rather grief can go up and down, and up and down. We begin to get through grief when we see the world in a new way, when we begin

to accept the world as now different than before. Our past stories become reshaped, our understanding of the universe now a new reality. Certainly, this is the case for so many of us Jews who continue to relive what happened on October 7, 2023.

How do we get through the fear and the grief? What are some ways we can respond? I want to offer three ways to respond to some of the thoughts and feelings that we may be carrying and feeling right now. Those are to respond with our hands, our heart, and our head.

### **Hands**

In times when the world feels chaotic or out of our control, many of us want to do something. This would be responding with our hands. Giving blood, for example, is a way of responding with our hands. Volunteering for a local charity, participating in a synagogue mitzvah morning, or donating tzedakah to Israel are also examples of responding with our hands. This gives us purpose, a way of having control at a time like this, when the world feels somewhat out of control and uncertain.

### **Heart**

What does it mean to respond with the heart? Have compassion for others. Find some time to sit down and simply listen to someone who has also been

going through a difficult time the past few months. Check in with Israeli friends. Write in a journal. Meditate. Come to Shabbat services. Close your eyes and hold your hands to your heart. Many of our hearts have broken over and over during the past four months. Nurture and offer nourishment to your heart and to the hearts of others.

### **Head**

Responding with our heads is to use our brains and our intellect. Think about which news sources you are watching, and make sure the information you are receiving and putting out there is accurate to the best of your knowledge. Read books on Israel and the history of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Take time to write and journal. Attend a rabbi's class! And, too, find time to let your brain relax and recoup. Turn off social media and the news for a while. Respond by deepening your understanding and knowledge around the current war in Israel.

However you respond, make sure to find and seek out ways to take care of yourself as you respond to the uncertain and chaotic world around you. Praying for us all to find strength through the fear and the grief and to respond meaningfully and intentionally with hand, heart, and head.

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**"I know so many of us remain on edge, fearful about how all of this will continue to play out in the weeks and months to come, while also still grieving the losses of October 7... In times when the world feels chaotic or out of our control, many of us want to do something."**

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## 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.

<p><b>Friday, February 2</b> 6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom Torah Portion – Exodus 18:1-20:23 Haftarah – Isaiah 6:1-7:6; 9:5-6</p>	<p>Haftarah – Jeremiah 34:8-22; 33:25-26</p> <p><b>Saturday, February 10</b> 8:00 a.m. Bet Mitzvah Retreat (until 12:30 p.m.) 8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom 9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast 9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person and on Zoom</p>	<p>9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person and on Zoom</p> <p><b>Friday, February 23</b> 6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service w/Kesher – in person and on Zoom, followed by a Shabbat Congregational Dinner (see weekly email for details) Torah Portion – Exodus 27:20-30:10 Haftarah – Ezekiel 43:10-27</p>
<p><b>Saturday, February 3</b> 8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom 9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast 9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person and on Zoom</p>	<p><b>Friday, February 16</b> 6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom Torah Portion – Exodus 25:1-27:19 Haftarah – I Kings 5:26-6:13</p>	<p><b>Saturday, February 24</b> 8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom 9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast 9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person and on Zoom</p>
<p><b>Friday, February 9</b> 6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service w/ Alannah Boyle, NCJW – in person and on Zoom, followed by a Shabbat Dinner &amp; Conversation (see weekly email for details) Torah Portion – Exodus 21:1-24:18</p>	<p><b>Saturday, February 17</b> 8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom 9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast</p>	

## HIGH HOLY DAY APPEAL DONATIONS

**Pillar of Congregation**

Jonathan Davis & Evelyn Rubak  
Jill & Steve Elbaum  
Molli & Stephen Hourihan  
Andrea Kern  
Ken West

**Benefactor of Congregation**

Michael & Judy Blumenthal  
Alexa & David Cohen

**President's Circle**

Luise Mann

**High Holy Day Appeal Donation**

Jonathan & Jennifer Dizney

Dr. & Mrs. Robert Friedman

Stephen Guss  
Mark Hotchkiss & Marcia Cohen  
Bernie & Jan Jacobs  
Neil & Joanne Lippman  
Ellen Sheiman  
Nancy & Irv Silverman  
Lori & Dan Underberger

## CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL CORE PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

At B'nai Israel we...

...TREAT each person in our community as created b'tzelem Elohim, in the image of the divine,

...DEVELOP, foster and nurture vibrant and meaningful Jewish lives in accordance with the values of our Torah and sacred texts,

...BUILD and deepen sacred relationships both within the synagogue community and the broader Greater Bridgeport community,

...ACT justly with a sacred obligation to tikkun olam (repair the world),

...FOSTER and deepen a love, commitment and connection to the land and people of Israel.



## EMOTIONS OF NAOMI SHEMER

BY CANTOR SCOTT HARRIS

I say it without apology and with great pride: I am a Reform Zionist.

What that means for me is that a connection to Israel is an integral part of my religious life. What that means for me is that I feel a connection to the Land and people that is central to the religious texts and the music of my people.

The emotional strains of Naomi Shemer's "Yerushalayim Shel Zahav" (Jerusalem of Gold) were first heard at an Israeli song festival in May 1967. Weeks later the song was in the hearts of soldiers called up to battle in the Six-Day War. And within days, the song's prophecy had come true as Jerusalem's holy places were redeemed, and the city was reunited in the most dramatic victory in the Six-Day War.

Israeli song-writer Naomi Shemer's personal vision of a spiritual and physical return to a "Jerusalem of gold of copper and light" is practically as well known as the Israeli national anthem ("Hatikvah" — The Hope). Ms. Shemer herself is legendary in the Israeli music scene. A prolific producer of songs, she was awarded the Israel

Prize in 1983 for her contribution in the field of music.

For over fifty years, Naomi Shemer's songs have captured the emotions of the country and attracted wide audiences. Usually, she has appeared in concert alone playing the piano and singing her own melodies. Ms. Shemer was born in Kvustat Kinneret, a kibbutz on the banks of the Sea of Galilee, in 1930. She learned to play the piano in her childhood. She studied as a concert pianist in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, later returning to the kibbutz where she taught music and wrote her earliest songs.

With the Bible as her text and Sea of Galilee as her inspiration, she wrote songs using a 4,000-year-old language to bring her modern Israel to life. Her earlier songs reflect the excitement of the pioneering era in Israel. Ms Shemer said that it was an exciting time and that she tried to capture that in her music. She was 18 years old when Israel became a state.

Although war and conflict were often the subject of her songs, a longing for peace is always evident. She grew up

under the shadow of Syrian bunkers in the Golan Heights, describing the persistence of the settlers down in the Jordan Valley in her moving song "The Eucalyptus Grove," one of the many classics which are associated with her. In her song "Machar" (Tomorrow), she still dreamt of peace: "Tomorrow; if not today/Tomorrow perhaps we will set sail/from the shores of Eilat to the Ivory Coast/and on the old destroyers/ Oranges will be loaded." In addition to "Yerushalayim Shel Zahav," "Al Kol Eileh," and "Machar," Naomi Shemer has written these hits: "Shiru Shel Abba," "Shar Hare Golan," and "Chorshat Ha-Eucalyptus."

Creating music in the Hebrew language did not limit her audience to just those who understand Hebrew. This didn't bother a musician who said that she viewed the country as family, her family. "When I write I have in mind this community with whom I can share my lines and perhaps something between the lines," she said. Israelis respond eagerly to her message, as do I and many of those outside of Israel.

Although she is no longer with us, her words and music live on.

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## CHESED COMMITTEE

Happy New Year to everyone from the Chesed/Caring Committee.

Another year brings with it opportunities to help congregants in need. This not only covers meals, but also occasional phone calls to say

hello, rides to services or shopping, condolence telephone calls, and shiva calls. We will be focusing on shiva calls this year as it is something new that we are trying to provide on a regular basis. As always, if there are any questions, you can contact either of us.

Have a wonderful new year.

Sara and Jim  
203-526-8341 or 203-258-1137



ALEXA COHEN/DIRECTOR OF THE EDUCATION CENTER  
WINTER SCENES FROM BONIM



Room 204 cooks up a feast



Maddie and Emily celebrate Shabbat



Fingerpainting fun in the Ones



Zoe, Emma, Hayley and Evan build creations on the light table in the STREAM Lab



Maggie proudly shows her ice treasure she discovered on the playground



Blair, Sadie, and Avery feed the Tzedakah dinosaur some coins



Louisa mixes up some delicious chocolate during Cooking Enrichment



Storytime with Miss Sarah



Maddie and Lily take a ride in the convertible



Louie loves the new playground

# KEHILAH HAPPENINGS



Gimel naming



Gan enjoys Chanukah pajama day with latkes and gelt



Chanukah Tefilah



Mr. Copperthite and his Card Games chug



The Kehilah students raised almost \$500 selling bracelets they made to support Israel



Vav enjoys some dreidel games during the school wide Chanukah party



7th graders have fun with Legos

# FEBRUARY DONATIONS

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

## **Rabbi Schultz Discretionary Fund**

**Bonnie Alterman**, in loving memory of Miriam & Ed Payess.

**Ilene Dobensky**, with appreciation from the Dobensky family to Rabbi Schultz for all of your help.

**Vernon & Meredith Dommu**, in appreciation of the synagogue's contributions to helping shape our grandchildren Josie & Eli Dommu's Jewish identities and the role that Rabbi Schultz has played in doing so.

**Dennis & Andrea Feinberg**, in memory of Larry & Florence Blum.

**Robert & Stacy Giglietti**, in memory of the yahrzeit of Michael Giglietti.

**Geoffrey & Melanie Kooris**, with thanks to everyone who included us in their gift of light this year.

**Aleksey & Raisa Ledvich**, in memory of our family members: grandmother Sara Goldenfarb; grandfather Eli Goldshteyn; grandmother Feige Vengerovskaya; and aunt Shelya Sotnik.

**Andrew & Carol Lubin**, with thanks to Rabbi Schultz.

**Ethan & Andrea Macnow**, in appreciation of the support Rabbi Schultz has provided to our family this year in memory of Esther Spiegel.

**Ivan Maisel & Meg Murray**, in appreciation to Rabbi Schultz.

**Jeff & Nancy Oberman**, in memory of Norma Alkon, mother of Nancy Oberman.

**Jonathan & Nancy Rosenthal**, in memory of Karin Gaugler, cherished family member of the Gaugler family.

**Rhea Spiegel**, with many thanks to Rabbi Schultz for the beautiful unveiling service for my mom, Esther Spiegel.

**Martin & Elaine Schwartz**, in appreciation and friendship to Rabbi Schultz, Jenny Goldstein & family for all you do; in appreciation and friendship to Steve & Jill Elbaum.

## **Rabbi Marion Discretionary Fund**

**Bonnie Alterman**, in loving memory of Miriam & Ed Payess.

**Vernon & Meredith Dommu**, in appreciation of the synagogue's contributions to helping shape our

grandchildren Josie & Eli Dommu's Jewish identities and the role that Rabbi Marion has played in doing so.

**Dennis & Andrea Feinberg**, in loving memory of Norma Alkon, mother of Jeff & Nancy Oberman.

**Stephen & Molli Hourihan**, in support of Rabbi Marion's commitment to train in mental health counseling.

**Jack Kadden**, in celebration of the Bat Mitzvah of Sylvie Herzlinger, granddaughter of Bob & Paula Herzlinger.

**Barbara Kauders**, in memory of Norma Alkon, mother of Nancy Oberman.

**Beth Lazar**, in loving memory of my great aunt, Esther Epstein; in honor of the memory of my mother, Shirley Greenberg Lazar.

**Andrew & Carol Lubin**, with thanks to Rabbi Marion.

**Ivan Maisel & Meg Murray**, in appreciation to Rabbi Marion.

**Sylvia Neigher**, in memory of Norma Alkon, mother of Nancy Oberman.

**Ben Winston & Melanie Oberman**, thank you for your love and support as we celebrated the life of my grandma, Norma Alkon. XOXO, Melanie Oberman, Ben Winston, and Emma and Daniel Winston-Oberman

**Jeff & Nancy Oberman**, in appreciation to Rabbi Marion and in loving memory of Norma Alkon, mother of Nancy Oberman.

**Martin & Elaine Schwartz**, in appreciation and friendship to Jon & Cleo Sonneborn.

## **Cantor Scott Harris Discretionary Fund**

**Sylvia Neigher**, with thanks to Cantor Harris, for all of your advice and help.

## **Rabbi James Prosnit Discretionary Fund**

**Nancy Kern**, in memory of Irv Kern.  
**Jeff & Nancy Oberman**, in memory of Norma Alkon, mother of Nancy Oberman.

**Martin & Elaine Schwartz**, in appreciation and friendship to Jim

Prosnit & Wendy Bloch; and to Alan & Sylvie Neigher.

## **Rabbi Prosnit Legacy Fund**

**Martin & Elaine Schwartz**, in appreciation and friendship to Don & Wendy Hyman; and to Steven Soberman & Suzanne Phillip.

## **Music Fund**

**Ellen Sheiman**, thank you to Cantor Scott Harris for the honor of chanting and for all your help.

**David & Judith Pressler**, in memory of Beatrice Pressler, mother of David Pressler and Cynthia Farber Stern, aunt of Judith Pressler.

**Laura Sydney-Pulton**, with thanks to Cantor Harris for his kindness when my father passed away.

## **Enhancement Fund**

**Robert & Elaine Friedman**, in memory of Ronnie Stone Bretholz, sister-in-law of Judith Lessler.

**Jeff & Jackie Madwed**, in memory of Dean Gaugler's sister Karin.

**Jane Pressman**, in memory of David Sydney, sending much love.

**Sandra Rosenberg**, with thanks, a donation.

**Jeffrey & Mindy Siegel**, many thanks, a donation.

## **Bonim Preschool Enrichment Fund**

**Steven Soberman & Suzanne Phillip**, in memory of Norma Alkon, mother of Nancy Oberman, grandmother of Melanie Oberman & great-grandmother of Emma & Daniel.

## **Bonim Preschool Scholarship Fund**

**Neil & Joanne Lippman**, in memory of Bernard Bernstein, father of Linda Bernstein.

**Kim Luccini**, in memory of Judith Bart.

## **Religious School Enrichment Fund**

**Ken & Rita Weinstein**, in memory of Henry Velenchik.

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# FEBRUARY DONATIONS

(CONTINUED)

**Rabbi Arnold Sher Social Action Fund Nancy Kern**, in memory of Irv Kern.

**Geoffrey & Melanie Kooris**, in honor of Koby's Bar Mitzvah.

**Dennis & Janet Magid**, in honor of the engagement of Michael Rost to Stephanie Klein.

**Randy & Beth Reich**, in honor of Peter & Bonnie Stein's granddaughter, Dylan Elgort, becoming a Bat Mitzvah.

**Samuel Rost**, in memory of David Sydney, father of Laura Sydney-Pulton.

**Martin & Elaine Schwartz**, in appreciation and friendship to Arnie & Serena Sher.

**Arnie & Serena Sher**, in memory of Henry Velenchik, brother of Eileen Tolk; in honor of Rick & Nancy Freedman on their 50th anniversary; in honor of the engagement of Michael Rost to Stephanie Klein.

## Vision Loan Reduction Fund

**Ellen Sheiman**, in memory of Debbie Sheiman, a remarkable woman who left the world a better place.

**The George Markley Chesed Fund**

**Sherry Fogel**, in memory of David Sydney, beloved father of Laura Sydney-Pulton. May his memory serve as a blessing.

**Marilyn Weinstein**, with thanks for beautiful Chanukah candles.

**Howard Weisman & Nina Silberman**, in memory of Karin Gaugler.

## Yakhani Caring Fund

**Dr. Robert & Paula Herzlinger**, in memory of Norma Alkon, mother of Nancy Oberman.

**Janet Jurow**, in memory of Norma Alkon, mother of Nancy Oberman.

**Mark & Liz Nigrosh**, in honor of Jerry & Dale Demner as they celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary.

## Alan H. Weinstein Scholarship Fund

**Dennis & Janet Magid**, in honor of Joni & Michael Greenspan's 60th anniversary.

**Arnie & Serena Sher**, in honor of Joni & Michael Greenspan's 60th anniversary.

**Daniel Smith Cemetery Fund**

**Ilene Dobensky**, with gratitude, the Dobensky family.

**Arnie & Serena Sher**, in memory of Harriet Miller; wife, mother, grandmother & friend.

## Arnold & Doris Tower Fund

**Steve & Ellen Tower**, in memory of Irving Glazer, father of Cheryl Green; in memory of David Sydney, father of Laura Sydney-Pulton; in memory of Norma Alkon, mother of Nancy Oberman.

## Jim & Barbara Abraham Education Fund

**Jeffrey Ackerman & Andrea Goodman**, in celebration of the birth of grandson Asa to Cristie & Stanton Krauss.

**Nancy Kern**, in memory of Irv Kern and Barbara & Jim Abraham.

## Sylvia Prosnit Adult Education Fund

**Ralph & Wendy Michel**, in appreciation to Rabbi Prosnit & Wendy Bloch, thank you.

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# FEBRUARY EVENTS

## Repro Shabbat February 9, 2024



**6:00 p.m. — Shabbat Service with Guest Speaker Alannah Boyle, National Council of Jewish Women**

**7:15 p.m. — Shabbat Dinner**  
**8:15 p.m. — Program and Discussion with Alannah Boyle**

Alannah Boyle works for National Council of Jewish Women National in Washington, D.C., where she manages NCJW's state policy advocates. Through this work, she supports NCJW state advocates in their state, federal, and local advocacy on NCJW's priority issues: courts, economic justice, and reproductive justice. She currently leads NCJW's ballot initiative work in six states where abortion is on the ballot in 2024. Alannah grew up in West Hartford, Connecticut, and graduated from

Manhattan College, where she majored in philosophy and peace studies. Her background is in electoral and faith-based organizing across the country, but she got her professional start here in Connecticut managing reproductive justice champion Jillian Gilchrest's first Connecticut House of Representatives campaign. In her free time, she is a women's sports fanatic and loves creating pottery for the people she loves.

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## Bam, Crack, Dot and Socialize at our Annual Rosh Chodesh/Women of B'nai Israel Game Night!\*

**Monday, February 12, 7:00–9:30 p.m.**

Join with women from across the B'nai Israel community for an evening of Mah Jong and socializing. It's a night for everyone, whether you know how to play or not. There will be tables for players with experience and tables for those who want to learn how to play...and if you just

want to come to socialize, that's okay, too! Snacks and beverages will be provided.

To participate in Game Night, all players must pre-register. Watch your email and Hashavua for a registration link coming soon. Please note that Mah Jong game tables will be arranged in advance by event organizers in order to facilitate congregational community building and a smooth flow to the evening.

For questions, please contact Game Night co-chair Carol Lubin at [crlubz@gmail.com](mailto:crlubz@gmail.com).

\*This event is co-sponsored by the Women of B'nai Israel (formerly the Sisterhood). The mission of Women of B'nai Israel is to bring together women to serve our temple, support our community, and enrich our lives through social events, educational and spiritual programs, fundraising, and community service.

*Continued on Page 10*

## FEBRUARY EVENTS (CONTINUED)



### B'nai Israel and the ADL Kulanu Collaboration

*Kulanu* is Hebrew for "all of us."

Kulanu is a synagogue partnership program with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) dedicated to empowering congregations to address antisemitism and hate in their communities through education, community engagement, and advocacy. Congregation B'nai Israel's Kulanu committee has been active for two years.

Through the Kulanu committee, members have access to in-person and virtual ADL programs covering multiple topics, including the current Israeli conflict; the state of antisemitism in Connecticut, the U.S., and beyond; and ways to be an advocate.

Our group also has an active book club, which has discussed such books as *It Could Happen Here* by Jonathan Greenblatt, and *Antisemitism Here and Now* by Deborah Lipstadt. Our book club is currently reading *Israel* by Noa Tishby. The book club is scheduled to meet at B'nai Israel on 2/22 and 3/14 at 7:00 p.m. All congregants are welcome to join.

Please email [aruskin04@gmail.com](mailto:aruskin04@gmail.com) or [jeff.madwed@gmail.com](mailto:jeff.madwed@gmail.com) to learn about joining the book club or the committee.

Report acts of antisemitism, bias, or discrimination to [www.ADL.org](http://www.ADL.org).

### Disability Awareness Shabbat Friday, February 23

**6:00 p.m.: Shabbat service**

**7:00 p.m.: congregational dinner**

Join us for a Shabbat service and dinner with members of our Keshet community. Keshet participants will help to lead the service along with our clergy. We hope you will join us as we celebrate the

wonderful diversity that exists within our community! All are welcome. The cost of the dinner is \$25/person. Please RSVP/pay for dinner on ShulCloud.

### What's Jewish about *The Twilight Zone* with Rabbi Marion on Zoom

Sunday, February 11, 8:00–9:15 p.m.



Join us in the Twilight Zone this winter! We'll watch an episode over Zoom together and then discuss the rich Jewish themes and values that we can glean from it. So, plop down on your couch, grab your computer, and BYOP (bring your own popcorn!)

Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89835450719?pwd=N3c0ZWwhNc0Jtbz11cU0xQ092OGRjZz09>

Meeting ID: 898 3545 0719

Passcode: 4VShfW

### Adult Education — Bagels and Burning Questions How the World Turned Against Israel (Repeat class from January) February 25, 11:00 a.m.–noon Natt Family Library

During the Six Day War of 1967, polls showed that Americans supported the Israelis over the Arab countries by overwhelming margins. In Europe, support for Israel ran even higher. In the United Nations Security Council, a British resolution essentially gave Israel the terms of peace it sought. Fast forward and Israel has become perhaps the most reviled country in the world. What happened?

Join with Rabbi Schultz for an exploration on how the world turned against Israel. We'll examine the past fifty years and discuss how a myriad of factors shifted much of the world's opinion against Israel. The class will be based on the book *Making David into Goliath* by



(203) 336-1858 • [www.cbibpt.org](http://www.cbibpt.org)

The Bulletin of Congregation B'nai Israel is published every month except July.

#### Officers

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Lilah Weinstein and Lindsay Oberhand .....	BIFTY Co-Presidents
Amy Pressman and Lauren Tropp .....	Bulletin Co-Editors
Scott Smith .....	Deputy Bulletin Editor

Congregation B'nai Israel, founded in 1858, seeks to be a vibrant Reform synagogue dedicated to the perpetuation of Jewish life and values within the framework of contemporary American Judaism. We are a gateway to Judaism for all. The Congregation B'nai Israel Bulletin publishes monthly 11 times a year (except July). To submit an article, announcement or ad to the Bulletin, please contact Co-Editors, Amy Pressman at [apressman@cbibpt.org](mailto:apressman@cbibpt.org) or Lauren Tropp at [ltropp@cbibpt.org](mailto:ltropp@cbibpt.org). Submissions are due by the first day of the month preceding the publication month. We reserve the right to edit all submissions for length or style.

## FEBRUARY EVENTS (CONTINUED)

Joshua Muravchik. This class is a repeat class for those who could not make the January session. Open to all.

### CBI Banned and Challenged Book Group Meetings

Join us for as many sessions as you can! All meetings will take place at B'nai Israel. We will be discussing each book together; participants are encouraged to read each book in advance.

**Lawn Boy**  
by Jonathan Evison  
Thursday, March 28, 7:00 p.m.



Discussion led by Alexa Cohen and Cadence Pentheny from the Triangle Community Center  
\*The 7th most challenged book of 2022 according to the ALA\*

**All Boys Aren't Blue**  
by George M. Johnson  
Thursday, May 16, 7:00 p.m.



Discussion led by Rabbi Marion and Cadence Pentheny from the Triangle Community Center.  
\*The 2nd most challenged book of 2022 according to the ALA\*

## KESHER CORNER

When you walk into B'nai Israel on a Thursday evening, you will hear us rehearsing as we learn the *Shema* and several songs that we will lead in the February 23 Kabbalat Shabbat service in honor of February being Disability Awareness Month. We look forward to seeing you that night and having you join us in chanting the *Shema* and singing several beautiful songs. This will be followed by a delicious Keshet/congregational dinner where you will get to know our Keshet attendees.

In March, some of us will be in the Purim Schpiel, and in May, we're going to perform the play *Our Beautiful World*. We've been singing, reading scripts, creating props, learning how to have a stage presence, and even practicing improv as we go over our parts in the play. Every minute is valuable because there's so much to do.

It will be our first performance since the creation of the Lee and David Lester Keshet Drama Club for All Abilities. We've been growing our membership,

and our doors are open. We're an inclusive group based on Jewish values, so all are welcome. Please contact us with any questions or if you'd like to sing with Keshet on Thursday evening, February 15, March 14, April 18, May 16, or June 20.

We are grateful for donations. They may be made online at the B'nai Israel website or in our office.

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- Eric Broder
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- Marcia Cohen
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- Andrew R. Lubin
- Daniel Schopick

The following members of the medical community join  
together in their support of the B'nai Israel *Bulletin*:

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## TIKKUN OLAM

### Read with Us! Camille Dungy's *Soil: The Story of a Black Mother's Garden*

B'nai Israel is a founding member of CONECT (Congregations for a New Connecticut), this area's interfaith social justice network. Over the years, we've hosted assemblies at the synagogue to lobby gubernatorial and other candidates on issues such as criminal justice reform, equity in education, health care, and voting rights. Since 2017, our Core Team has also sponsored book and film discussions related to antiracism and other topics.



This winter, in collaboration with the Eco Justice Team and nOURish Bridgeport, we're reading *Soil: The Story of a Black Mother's Garden* by Camille Dungy. Copies are available in the synagogue library. Even if you've missed the first discussion on January 23, please join us for all or parts of the remaining dates:

- February 15 at 7:00 p.m.: Discussion with Rev. Sara Smith from nOURish Bridgeport
- March 5 at 7:00 p.m.: Second half of *Soil*

Our Core Team welcomes new members! For further information, please contact Emily Lehrman or Jeff Schwartz, Co-Chairs.

emilylehrman@gmail.com  
jeff.schwartz2991@gmail.com

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## POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH IN THE GOLDEN YEARS

BY J. SHERRIE GLASS

There were 55.8 million retired Americans as of the 2020 census. Roughly 1 in 6 people in the United States were age 65 and over, or 16.8% of the population. What happens to a person psychologically, physically, and spiritually when they decide to retire? LIFE CHANGES. Some retirees have invested wisely and have good pensions and adequate social security. Many retirees own their own home or even a second home. They find that retirement offers them plenty of free time to live a leisurely lifestyle and many of them enjoy traveling. Some retirees find ways to volunteer and give back to the community. However, 2 in 5 retirees — that is about 37% of retired persons — have no retirement savings. Only about 12% have at least the recommended \$555,000 in savings.

This high percentage of retirees with very little savings probably has to do with factors beyond their control. Various health, environmental, and financial crises have all impacted the financial strain on Americans in the last few years. Also, nearly half of retirees (47%) said that their company didn't offer 401(k) plans or pensions.

Both groups of retirees, those who feel secure in their retirement and those who do not, face very similar challenges when it comes to their new lifestyle. So... what could be the problem? Everything seems perfect in the "golden time" of life... right? Well, it isn't as simple as that for every retiree.

What are some of the obstacles to be overcome when the life you have spent a

lifetime creating for yourself is suddenly over? POOF! One day you are at work with all the familiarity that you are accustomed to around you. If you enjoy your career, there may be excitement at work, usually some stress, sometimes adventure, hopefully opportunity for growth, colleagues who respect you and/or are inspired by you, community involvement, etc. Then, one day, you retire, and the next morning you wake up and realize you don't have anywhere to go. No one is expecting you, and you have unlimited time to do whatever you want. But how are you supposed to structure your day?

The FIRST OBSTACLE to overcome in creating a healthy mental attitude is to MAINTAIN YOUR SENSE OF SELF. Retirees often say that they lose their sense of identity because who they were at work gave them their self-worth.

The SECOND OBSTACLE to overcome is that of KEEPING UP A SCHEDULE. People usually have limited free time when they are working but now, suddenly in retirement, they have too much time on their hands! So, this, added to the loss of identity, is where the beginning of sadness and depression start to affect retirees.

The THIRD OBSTACLE to overcome is FINDING A NEW PASSION or sense of adventure to pursue in your new life. It can be a hobby or a sport or an artistic endeavor. You can take classes at community centers or colleges in your town. If you have a talent of your own, you can teach others as well! You can travel to new places if you

have the means. Taking specialty cooking classes can improve your knowledge of healthy foods.

Also, retirees need to have an exercise regime to maintain strong physical and mental health. Picking up a new sport later in life can be fulfilling. Joining a local gym and participating several times per week in strength or aerobics classes or swimming or water aerobics programs can make a huge difference in your mental and physical health.

The FOURTH OBSTACLE to positive mental health is FINDING LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE who can support and inspire you. Retirees find they have more time to serve their religious communities and their neighborhood communities. This gives retired people a real sense of belonging and serving, which increases their self-worth and overall level of happiness. This feeling of serving others enriches the retirees' spiritual life as well.

The PRIME OBJECTIVE in maintaining positive mental health in the golden years is to seek out those people and activities which can EMPOWER you and add ENJOYMENT and QUALITY to your life. If you have problems adjusting to your new, retired lifestyle, such as a sense of hopelessness, loss, and/or depression, don't hesitate to call upon a mental health care professional to help you make a smooth transition. This new phase of your life can be the most rewarding and exciting time of your entire life! EMBRACE IT!



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## BIFTY



BIFTY is excited for our February events! All CBI teens in grades 8–12 can attend BIFTY. We meet on Thursday nights from 7:00–8:30 p.m. in the BIFTY lounge. To stay up to date on events, follow us on Instagram and ask to join our text group. We look forward to seeing you at our next event!

Our February events are:

February 8, 7:15-8:15 p.m. — ice skating at the Inn at Longshore in Westport. Bring \$20 for ticket and to rent skates.

February 29 — join us for a winter themed program!  
\*please note there is no BIFTY on February 15 or February 22

On Friday, February 23–Saturday, February 24, join us for our annual BIFTY sleepover at the Temple! Meet us at CBI at 7:30 p.m. with an overnight bag and something to sleep on. Pick up is Saturday at 9:30 a.m., after the morning service. Please let advisor Marisa know if you will be attending by emailing [munderberger@gmail.com](mailto:munderberger@gmail.com).