



BETH CHAIM CONGREGATION
Celebrating Spiritual Community Since 1978

THE STAR

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**Shana
Tova!**

Image by Annette Meyer from Pixabay

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NOTE: The STAR is currently only available in digital format.

The Digital Color Edition of The Star is available online. To view/download The Star and enjoy the benefits of hyperlinks, go to the Beth Chaim website: <https://www.bethchaim.com/news/beth-chaim-star>.

You can also find the link to the Digital Color edition on our Members Only Facebook page and in the weekly Happenings.

Follow us on Social Media:



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Our Mission

At Beth Chaim Congregation, we are reimagining how we experience and celebrate Judaism, and how we are a source of belonging that enriches and uplifts the lives of our members. Our approachable, flexible worship, grounded in tradition yet modernized, embraces spirituality and soulful Jewish practice.

- We welcome with warmth all who seek a connection to Jewish life regardless of their religious beliefs and experiences. We **embrace Jews of all backgrounds** as well as those new to Judaism **and interfaith relationships** and meet our congregants wherever they are on their **Jewish journey**.
- We are your Jewish **community** in the East Bay. We celebrate your simchas, and we are there with chesed in your times of need. We are your people, your community, a place to belong.
- Our **Sisterhood, Brotherhood, youth opportunities, and events** for all can fill your Jewish soul.
- **We learn.** Our Tree of Life preschool, Beit Midrash, B'nei Mitzvah program and adult education opportunities provide lifelong enrichment of your Jewish experience.
- We are a **tranquil place of togetherness** and Jewish spirituality in the beautiful Danville hills.

Are you, or someone you know, being abused?

If you need help, please contact:

SHALOM BAYIT HELP HOTLINE AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Helpline: (866) 742-5667 (SHALOM-7)

Toll-Free within the Bay Area

(510) 845-7233 (SAFE) outside the Bay Area

(650) 574-7233 (SAFE) Peninsula office

For questions or support, contact:

Shalom Bayit

(510) 845-8874

communities@shalom-bayit.org



COMING SOON! Events not to miss in September and October

Mark your calendar for these upcoming events. **Check the weekly Happenings and [Beth Chaim website](#) for details, to RSVP, and for updates or changes.** Also visit our website for a full listing of [Worship Services](#).

Date	Event	Day	Time	Where
SEPT 7	Sisterhood Monthly Walking Group	Thursday	9:30 AM	Lunardi's Parking Lot
SEPT 8	Sisterhood Floral Arranging Class	Friday	10:00 AM	Home of Susi Cherry
SEPT 8	Sharing Shabbat Together	Friday	6:00 PM	BCC
SEPT 10	First Day Religious School with Breakfast	Sunday	9:00 AM	BCC
SEPT 11	Genealogy Club	Monday	7:00 PM	BCC
SEPT 15	Erev Rosh Hashanah Service	Friday	7:00 PM	BCC
SEPT 16	Rosh Hashanah Services (see schedule p. 6)	Saturday	varies	BCC
SEPT 17	Rosh Hashanah Services (see schedule p.6)	Sunday	varies	BCC
SEPT 19	Sisterhood Book Club	Tuesday	7:00 PM	TBD
SEPT 23	Sisterhood Movie Night	Saturday	TBD	TBD
SEPT 24	Sukkah Building Party	Sunday	9:00 AM	Beth Chaim Patio
SEPT 24	Erev Yom Kippur Service	Sunday	7:00 PM	BCC
SEPT 25	Yom Kippur Services (see schedule)	Monday	varies	BCC
SEPT 29	No Friday Shabbat Service due to Sukkot Sat.	Friday		
SEPT 30	SUKKOT	Saturday		
SEPT 30	PJ Library Teddy Bear Tea Party	Saturday	10:00 AM	BCC – Sukkah on Patio
SEPT 30	Sukkot Celebration & Potluck	Saturday	6:00 PM	BCC – Sukkah on Patio
OCT 4	Sisterhood Sukkot Celebration	Wednesday		Home of R. Jamie Hyams
OCT 5	Sisterhood Monthly Walking Group	Thursday	9:30 AM	Lunardi's Parking Lot
OCT 6	Tot Shabbat	Friday	5:30 PM	BCC
OCT 6	Simchat Torah & Ruach Service	Friday	6:00 PM	BCC
OCT 7	Brotherhood Oktoberfest	Saturday	6:00 PM	BCC – Sukkah on Patio
OCT 8	SIMCHAT TORAH	Sunday		
OCT 9	Genealogy Club	Monday	7:00 PM	BCC
OCT 10	Sisterhood Rosh Chodesh Gathering	Tuesday	7:00 PM	TBD
OCT 13	Sisterhood Lunch	Friday	11:45 AM	Hazy BBQ
OCT 13	Sharing Shabbat Together	Friday	6:00 PM	BCC
OCT 15	Torah Tots	Sunday	10:00 AM	BCC
OCT 17	Sisterhood Book Club	Tuesday	7:00 PM	TBD
OCT 20	Sharing Shabbat Together	Friday	6:00 PM	BCC
OCT 27	Sharing Shabbat Together	Friday	6:00 PM	BCC

Ongoing Weekly Activities

Religious School	Sundays	8:30 AM	
Brotherhood Hiking Group	Wednesdays	8:30 AM	
Mah Jongg	Fridays	1:00 PM	Virtual

Looking for more activities? [CCJCC Under One Tent](#) offers a calendar of offerings in the East Bay area. Click on the image for details.



BETH CHAIM CONGREGATION HIGH HOLY DAYS 5784 (2023)

ROSH HASHANAH

EREV ROSH HASHANAH
EVENING SERVICE

FRI., SEPTEMBER 15
7:00 PM

ROSH HASHANAH DAY ONE

SAT., SEPTEMBER 16

MORNING SERVICE

9:00 AM

ONEG FOLLOWING MORNING SERVICE

FAMILY SERVICE

2:30 PM

TOT SERVICE

3:30 PM

SHOFAR & TASHLICH SERVICE

5:00 PM

(Sycamore Valley Park)

ROSH HASHANAH DAY TWO

SUN., SEPTEMBER 17

MORNING SERVICE

9:00 AM

YOM KIPPUR

EREV YOM KIPPUR

SUN., SEPTEMBER 24

COMMUNITY YAHRZEIT CANDLE LIGHTING 6:30 PM

EVENING SERVICE (KOL NIDRE)

7:00 PM

YOM KIPPUR DAY

MON., SEPTEMBER 25

MORNING SERVICE

9:00 AM

FAMILY SERVICE

2:30 PM

TOT SERVICE

3:30 PM

YIZKOR

4:30 PM

NEILAH CONCLUDING SERVICE

5:30 PM

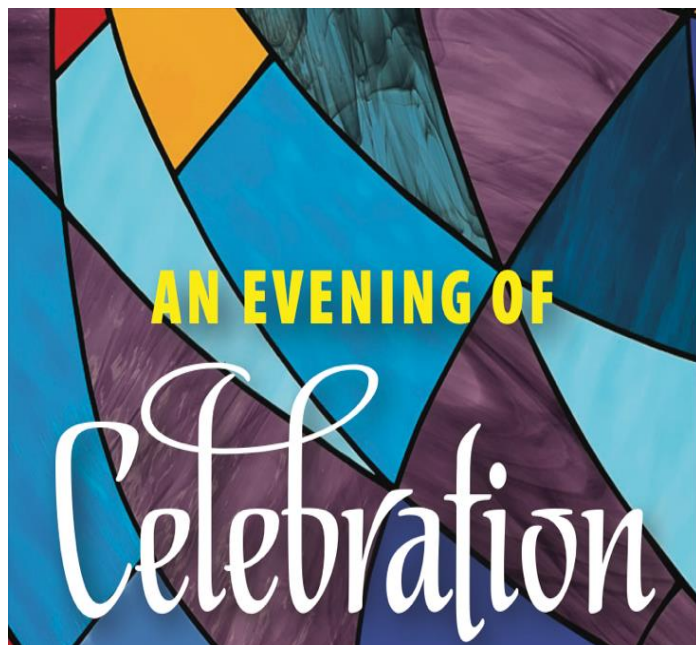
BREAK -THE - FAST

6:30 PM

**Non-members need to pre-register for all services by calling
925.736.7146 or emailing admin@bethchaim.com**

Join Us!

Beth Chaim Annual Fundraiser!



Join us to celebrate **Rabbi Dan Goldblatt's** 30 years of leadership, love and dedication to our community and for the difference he has made in the lives of so many.

and Honor

Sunday, November 5, 2023

4:30 – 8:30 pm

Cocktails, music, silent auction, and dinner

RSVP to attend by no later than Sunday, October 1, 2023

Individual tickets \$120

Click [HERE](#) or copy and paste this link in your browser

bethchaim.ejoinme.org/RSVP

Round Hill Country Club, Alamo

Cocktail Attire

Questions? Please contact:

Tanya James at tanyasjames@comcast.net or 925-352-3890

Judith Markowitz at jmarkowitz@yahoo.com or 925-819-0466

Special Events and Workshops

SUKKOT UNDER THE SUKKAH!

**Sat. September 30
6:00pm - 9:00pm**

You are invited to celebrate Sukkot at Beth Chaim with friends and family. We gather together to celebrate the joy of the Fall harvest. This is a sweet opportunity to connect with others and have a meal under our fabulous sukkah! Please RSVP and we ask that each family bring a dish to share. The meal will be vegetarian/dairy

[Click here to RSVP](#)



SIMCHAT TORAH RUACH!

A night of celebrations

COME & REJOICE WITH OUR TORAH!
Friday Oct. 6 at 6:00pm

Adults & kids carry the Torah

Unscrolling the Torah in a large circle

Dancing led by Dorit Hofman

Pizza & Ice Cream will be provided

SHARING SHABBAT TOGETHER

Silent Auction Donations Needed!

On Sunday, November 5th, 2023, Beth Chaim will be having our biggest fundraiser of the year. At this event, we are honoring Rabbi Dan for his 30 years of leadership, love and dedication to our community! It will be an evening of celebration with cocktails, music, dinner and more at Roundhill Country Club.

We are looking for more silent auction items! **What exciting items do you have to donate to this event?** So far, we have a vacation getaway in Mexico, golf for four at Crow Canyon, some gift certificates for restaurants, fine wine, and more! We can use sports tickets, fun experiences, travel getaways, gift cards, dining, Judaica, wine, and any merchandise that will make this silent auction extraordinary. We also need large baskets to gather donated items into appealing packages.

Be sure to arrive on time at 4:30 on November 5 to have time to kibbitz, listen to music, and bid on silent auction items before dinner. There will be no live auction this year.

Click [HERE](#) to make an auction donation or contact Debbie Roof at debbie.roof@yahoo.com.

Beth Chaim opts for Reform after 45 unaffiliated years

By Emma Goss, Jewish News of California

Throughout his 30 years leading Congregation Beth Chaim in Danville, Rabbi Dan Goldblatt noticed a recurring dilemma when he got phone calls from prospective families seeking a synagogue to join in the San Ramon Valley.

“They’d ask, ‘What flavor of Judaism are you?’” Goldblatt said. His response: “We’re Jewish.” Their next question: “Well, what movement?”

Since its founding in 1978, Congregation Beth Chaim had been unaffiliated with any Jewish movement. The purpose of remaining unaffiliated was to be as welcoming and inclusive as possible, Goldblatt said. But he’s found that being unaffiliated did the opposite.

“It leaves them questioning exactly what we are,” said Goldblatt, who is 68. And that ambiguity, he believes, has limited the synagogue’s ability to grow.

In January, the synagogue’s 21-person board began to explore the possibility of joining the Union for Reform Judaism, which represents more than 1,250 congregations across the United States and Canada, according to the URJ website.

By April, the Beth Chaim board asked all of the synagogue’s 206 member households to vote on whether the synagogue should join URJ. All but two members voted in favor. Congregation Beth Chaim officially became part of the URJ on April 21.

“We did not lose a single family in affiliating,” Goldblatt said. The individuals that voted against affiliating decided to remain at Beth Chaim.

In fact, since the transition, the synagogue has grown by seven families, bringing a combined eight children with them, according to Arie Cohen, the synagogue board president.

In an interview, Cohen said another benefit of affiliating is that URJ provides summer camp discounts of \$150 to \$300 to families that send their children to one of URJ’s 14 camps across North America. That includes Camp Newman in Santa Rosa, to which Beth Chaim families have sent their children for years.

Beth Chaim will also join URJ’s national youth group program, the National Federation of Temple Youth, or NFTY, and will have the opportunity to send high school

students to live in Israel for up to a year through the URJ. The timing of joining the Reform movement comes a year ahead of Goldblatt’s planned retirement at the end of June 2024. The synagogue board is searching for an interim rabbi, and URJ affiliation is helping in that process.

“They have so much experience. We do not have to re-create the wheel,” said Evan Levy, a board member who co-led the affiliation process and is helping with the interim rabbi search.

Goldblatt served as spiritual leader — but not rabbi — of Beth Chaim between 1983 and 1985 before he was ordained by ALEPH, the Alliance for Jewish Renewal. He returned in 1993 as rabbi to lead the congregation.

The synagogue was started by 25 “older couples,” Goldblatt said. “As they began to approach the end of their lives, they decided that they had something special and wanted it to continue past them.”

The congregation moved from Pleasant Hill to a Danville church to its current location.

“Right away, growth was huge,” Goldblatt said of the relocation to Danville.



As an unaffiliated congregation, Beth Chaim infused its practices with a hodgepodge of Jewish traditions from across denominations.

Over the years, Beth Chaim did away with using stapled-together pages of prayers and adopted Kol HaNeshamah, the Reconstructionist movement’s prayerbook, Goldblatt said. The synagogue adopted Orthodox Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan’s “The Living Torah” as its chumash (Torah in printed form). Melodies at prayer services are from all denominations of Judaism, Goldblatt said.

Thirty years ago, he said, the congregation wouldn’t have felt as strongly aligned with the Reform movement as it does today.

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Reform Judaism now mirrors Beth Chaim’s “all are welcome” philosophy, Goldblatt said. In 2020, for example, URJ appointed its first director of racial equity, diversity and inclusion (REDI). The REDI initiative focuses on “racial justice and equity in all its forms, and also addresses homophobia, transphobia, ableism, classism, sexism, and other forms of oppression,” according to the URJ.

Now when congregants compare Beth Chaim to Reform Judaism, “it’s more of an apples to apples,” Cohen said, rather than “apples to oranges.”

Levy appreciates the extended network of connections that come with joining the URJ.

“If we have any question in the world about how to run our synagogue, there is an email chain that’s active within the URJ that we can just type an email into. And we’ll get 20 responses back within seconds,” Levy said.

It’s also a comfort to be part of something bigger and to shift from being a remote island to being within a big tent. “We’ve been alone,” Levy said. “The support [from URJ] has been massive.”

These days, the synagogue receives two to three calls a week from prospective members who have heard about Beth Chaim’s new Reform affiliation, according to Cohen.

When Goldblatt picks up the phone now to answer their questions, he’s having a different conversation than before.

“It’s not going to change who we are,” Goldblatt said of joining the Reform movement. “It’s just going to enhance who we are.”

Link to the full [J – Jewish News Weekly article](#)

We are ready to serve you differently – Text Information Service Launched!

By Ellen Waltrip, Communications Director, and Neela Arumugham, Beth Chaim Administrative Assistant

We all get a zillion emails every day that clutter our inbox. The one from Beth Chaim Congregation (BCC) can get lost in this deluge. Beth Chaim just launched a text reminder service to help keep our members informed about important events and updates.

Our text number is 925.966.1800. The 966 can be remembered as YOM (meaning “day” in Hebrew) while 1800 is our address (18 also connotes “chai” or “life” in Hebrew). We like to remember it as “days of our lives” because there is so much drama and mystery here at BCC (like who used up all the paper plates or what do we do about the dead squirrel in the yard or why is my code not working?!).

To sign up for the text reminder service, simply follow these steps:

Text CONNECT to 925-966-1800. You will receive a message asking you to reply with a confirmation keyword or code to complete the subscription process. That’s it!

KEYWORDS TO TEXT US FOR ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS:	
bccinfo	To get relevant contact info i.e., membership, religious school, events, etc.
connect	to sign up to get texts from us
cccvolunteer	To sign up to volunteer
hhd2023	To get 2023 HHD information
sukkot2023	To get 2023 Sukkot information
simchattorah2023	To get 2023 Simchat Torah information

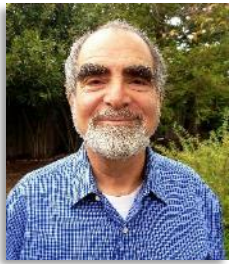
Any suggestions (especially from the teenage experts) will be most welcome. Feel free to text us your next query. The non-bot’s work hours are 8.30am to 4.30pm weekdays.

We hope you find this new service helpful, and we look forward to keeping you more informed and connected with our Temple community. Thank you for your continued support!

Rabbi Dan's Reflection

Some of the Sweet Gifts of These High Holy Days

By Rabbi Dan Goldblatt



Every year we spend time considering how we can make our High Holy Day experience more meaningful for our Beth Chaim community.

After many years of High Holy Days in the shadow of COVID, we are hopeful that most of you will

attend in person. We will continue to stream for those who are unable to attend in person, but we also know that it is a completely different experience to sit in the sanctuary with friends and other community members and soak in the amazing energy of these services.

This will be my last High Holy Days leading services for our community, and I feel so blessed, because it is always one of the spiritual highlights of the year. This will also be Eve Decker's last year as musical director for our High Holy Days. Eve has been such a gift to Beth Chaim. Last year she informed us that it was going to be her final year. I implored her to come back for one more year since I knew that this would be my final year and the thought of leading without her was unimaginable. She graciously agreed and I am profoundly grateful.

Eve has such a deep connection to every prayer she leads. She has that rare gift of a professional musician who truly understands prayer. The most powerful way to lead prayer has nothing to do with performance. It is entering into the prayer and leading it with a wide-open heart and a deep connection to wonder and awe.

I think that many people in our community take Eve for granted because we have been blessed with her presence for the past 15 years. Eve is the most talented music director I have ever known. She leads our Chazzanut Group with grace and humility. She has an incredibly mature ego and understands that the privilege of leading the community in prayer is a gift beyond measure.

I have worked with Eve all these years, co-led many holiday celebrations and B'nei Mitzvah services with her, and have grown to love her dearly. Pay attention to how skillfully she reads the energy in the sanctuary and responds with sensitivity and an inner conviction that has complete integrity.

This year we will have a full complement of our Chazzanut Group which we haven't had for four years. There are veteran members of the group like Judith Markowitz and Nancy Orgel who have been singing with us for more than two decades. Drew Porter, Beth Seigel, and Jeff Reitzes have also been with us for many, many years. Then there are people who have only been with us for several years including Laura Benn, Bonnie Brors, Marc Mazer and my wife, Zoe Goldblatt.



Zoe graciously stepped in to help lead services (initially from our home) during the COVID pandemic. When we returned to the sanctuary (with no in-person presence) Zoe once again graciously agreed to plan and lead the services with me. Her presence and her soulfulness have been such gifts to our community and, frankly, changed the way I lead services. Her role on the bimah during the "COVID High Holy Days" brought so much more warmth and intimacy and helped Eve and me lead these services in an empty sanctuary. While Zoe has a lovely voice, her presence and deep connection to prayer has had a lovely impact on how I lead prayer.

Beth Siegel, a veteran member of our Chazzanut Group who moved to Alaska, usually has come back for either Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur. This year she decided to stay for the entire Ten Days of Return and sing with our Chazzanut Group for all the High Holy Days. Thank you, Beth.

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Finally, Dean Chapman, one of the truly great voices of our community for many years, has decided to come down from Bend Oregon where he and his wife Renee currently live, and sing with us for Yom Kippur. Some of you know that Dean encountered a challenge with his vocal cords and temporarily lost his ability to sing. He has worked extremely hard to regain his voice and is excited to be one of the people who will sing Kol Nidre this year.

I remember when Dean first joined the community so many years ago. He had sung professionally in Las Vegas and had an incredibly sweet vocal gift. I invited him to join our choir and he agreed to lead our Ruach Services for the families and young people of our community. Dean was very excited about a new presence on the Jewish sacred music scene, named Rick Recht. He brought Recht's music to our community and added so much life and vitality to our services. Dean was the music director of our High Holy Day Service for many years and is much beloved by all who know him.

I was so moved to hear how hard he was working to try to regain his voice and he expressed the desire to sing Kol Nidre once more. For those of you who might not be aware, Kol Nidre, the most iconic prayer of the High holy Days, in addition to being one of the most soulful, deeply moving prayers in our tradition is also one of the most difficult prayers to sing.

The prayer is in Aramaic and is filled with difficult to pronounce multisyllabic words and awkward musical phrases to those words. It also has an enormous dynamic range which means you have to have a voice that can hold powerful low notes as well as soaring high notes.

When I was first working with Dean on this prayer, I explained that Kol Nidre is traditionally sung three times. The first time it is sung in a near whisper, as if the weight of the prayer is almost too much to bear. The second time, the person singing is invited to gain confidence, and this is reflected in an increased volume and intensity. Finally, the third time, the one who is offering this prayer is encouraged to sing fully on behalf of the entire community and sing from the depths of their soul, holding nothing back. Anyone who heard Dean sing Kol Nidre will never forget it.

Dean recently told me that singing with somewhat compromised vocal cords is like trying to express yourself with a more limited vocabulary. You have to choose your words more carefully and do your very best to find a way to make yourself understood. What an honor to have Dean back with us once again bringing his heart and voice to our High Holy Day Services.



High Holy Days

Looking with the Eyes of our Hearts – An Elul Teaching

from a blog By Rabbi Myriam Klotz, Senior Core Faculty, Institute for Jewish Spirituality

The first word of the Torah portion we read as Elul begins is “Look!” – “*Re’eh!*” Really see that before you today, this day, is a blessing and a curse. Choose life! we are told in this *parasha* (Torah portion). It is right here before you, in the life you are living now.

The core practice this month is to practice looking with the eyes of our hearts at what is before us and inside us, this life in its complexities and contradictions, its messiness and its authenticity.

Rabbi Alan Lew (z”l) writes in *This is Real and You are Completely Unprepared*: “Pay attention to your life. Every moment is profoundly mixed. Every moment contains a blessing and a curse. Everything depends on beholding our lives with clear eyes, seeing the potential blessing in each moment as well as the potential curse, choosing the former, forswearing the latter.”

Elul calls to us with daily shofar blasts to help us wake up, to hear and behold ourselves more clearly, to engage in the practice of *cheshbon hanefesh*—a spiritual accounting – In order to help us better discern how to make choices that are life-affirming blessings.

It’s not necessarily obvious how you and I are to do this work of looking deeply and open-heartedly into the life we have been living, or not living, this year, in order to choose the life-giving path of blessing going forward. Alan Lew suggests three practices to help us see ourselves more clearly and with greater perspective: prayer, meditation, and/or, focusing on one thing.

Prayer:

Lew writes that “the Hebrew word for prayer is *tefilah*. The infinitive form of the verb is *l’hitpalel* - to pray - ... denoting action that one performs on oneself”. In this way we come to know ourselves more deeply and clearly. For me prayer is a need that my soul has. Just as my body has the need to drink to hydrate, my soul has a need to pray for spiritual hydration, [to be] nourished by reaching inward and outward to the Ineffable Mystery by which I am born into each new moment. The practice of praying – liturgically or otherwise – can help you return to the Self of your self, to touch the deep core of your existence, perhaps loosen the grips that shame, bias, doubt and the like might have upon you and enable you to [do] the work of teshuva that Elul is about.

Meditation:

During Elul you can set an intention to devote time each day to rest in the quiet awareness of breath and sensation. Choose a focal point for your attention, such as breath, or sound, or a visual anchor like a candle flame or a flower. Drop into the present moment and pay attention to all that arises and passes in your awareness. Saturating your attention in the present moment of your life, Lew writes, can help you see yourself more clearly. Meditation can help you to “see that [you] are something larger than yourself. This is an essential aspect of Rosh HaShanah – seeing [yourself] as not just a discrete ego, but as part of a great flow of being.”

Focus on one thing:

For some of us, prayer and meditation may not be helpful tools; the resistance to engaging them is too great. Lew writes that many of us “will never get over finding the daily prayer service tedious and opaque. Many others will either be frightened to death or bored to tears by the prospect of meditation.” For some of us who have experienced trauma (including religious trauma), prayer and meditation may for now harm more than help. The simple practice of focusing on one thing in your life may be a more helpful way to see your life more clearly.

Lew suggests that you focus on one fundamental and simple aspect of your life, and “commit yourself to being totally conscious and honest about it for the thirty days of Elul”. Since everything we do is an expression of the entire truth of our lives, paying attention to one thing – like when we go to sleep, or eating, or how we engage on our cell phones through the day – we can begin to see our patterns, aversions, desires, and the like more clearly. Focusing on one thing in our life this month can help us see ourselves more clearly and help us wake up.

Lew writes, “So we can pray, we can meditate. Or we can simply choose one thing in our life and live that one small aspect in truth, and then watch in amazement as the larger truth of our life begins to emerge. Every moment of our life carries with it the possibility of a great blessing and a great curse, a blessing if we live in truth, a curse if we do not...All that’s required of you is to see what’s in front of your face and to choose the blessing in it.”

May you choose blessing in your life as this year begins to draw to a close, and may we together know the blessing of wise discernments and loving hearts.

High Holy Days

A New Dimension for Yom Kippur 5784

By Rabbi Dan Goldblatt

Planning for the next year's High Holy Days begins in a rather informal way the minute we dance the last dance at our Simchat Torah celebration. As a rabbi, I begin looking for new music to add some spice and excitement to the regular High Holy Day liturgy we have used and become familiar with. There is always a balance between expectations and innovation.

I remember the first year I introduced chanting the Torah portions on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur in English as well as Hebrew. There were people who felt ambushed. They had never heard this done before and it was difficult to hear. Now, all these years later, if we didn't chant in English, people would be upset and disappointed.

One of the areas that I always try to think about is how we can enhance the element of remembering loved ones who have died. Memory is such an important part of our High Holy Days. Remembering loved ones who have died is a tender, meaningful dimension of these sacred holidays.

The first year we began inviting people to place rose petals in the ark for loved ones who have died during the *Yizkor* Service, there were all kinds of concerns about the lengthening of this service of remembering. Were people going to be willing to patiently wait their turn to place their rose petals in the ark? Would this create a 'black hole' in the service and drain the delicate energy from the service?

In fact, it has become a climax of our *Yizkor* Service and people share how meaningful it is to have a few moments in front of the open ark – remembering and placing a rose petal for each loved one they are honoring.



Yom Kippur is one of the sacred days when we kindle a *Yahrzeit* (Year's End) Candle for a close loved one who has died (in addition to on the anniversary of their death). Many people light the *Yahrzeit* candle before they leave home to come to the Erev Yom Kippur service.

This year before the start of the Erev Yom Kippur service we will have tables set up in front of the bimah filled with *Yahrzeit* candles. If you wish to light one of these *Yahrzeit* candles in memory of your loved ones, we ask that you come between 6:30 - 6:45 pm to do so. We will be providing the *Yahrzeit* candles and will have lighters available. We ask that you come directly to the front of the sanctuary and wait your turn to kindle a *Yahrzeit* candle. The Chazzanut Group will be softly singing appropriate, soulful prayers.

We ask that you light only one *Yahrzeit* candle per family for all those your family is remembering. We also ask that you light the candle and take your seat where you can spend a few moments honoring the memory of your loved ones. Whether you have chosen to light a *Yahrzeit* candle or not, we also ask that you respect the space of silent remembering and refrain from kibbitzing with your friends and fellow members.

We believe that these lights, which will burn for the entire 24 hours of Yom Kippur, will keep the memory of our loved ones in our sight and in our consciousness throughout the Yom Kippur holy day. Please know that we will start the Erev Yom Kippur Service promptly at 7:00 pm and will ask people not to continue lighting the *Yahrzeit* candles once the service begins so as not to create a distraction for our members who have come to pray. We hope that this communal sharing of special and important memories will be another way to bring our community even closer together on this Yom Kippur.



Spiritual Life

by Larry Candeub, Director Religious Affairs/Spiritual Life



Please feel free to contact me, Larry Candeub, Bccreligiousaffairs@gmail.com with ANY thoughts you have about this, or things you would like to see in the upcoming months ...it's all about serving our community.

Dear Friends,

After last year's High Holy Day Services many of you took time to provide feedback. We are using that feedback to adjust several areas to better meet your needs. I summarize below some of the issues and how we are addressing them this year.

Prayer Books - There has been much discussion regarding which to use. Last year, after surveying the membership, it was still a toss-up. The newer, printed pamphlets have more current readings and follow our Service much better. The older books have additional readings which many of our members enjoy. This year, once again, we will use the soft sided prayer books. However, we will have the older books available for those of you who are interested in accessing what they have to offer.

Torah Processional - We will return to the tradition of the Torah Processional. Due to Covid, we have not utilized this during the High Holy Days since 2019.

Torah Chanting - We are once again blessed to have Rabbi Dan's brother, David, chanting from the Torah during the High Holy Days. We would love to have more members chant from the Torah during our services. Rabbi Dan will hold some sessions this Spring to help members who would like to learn to read or chant from the Torah during the HHDs.

Tashlich/Shofar Service - Our popular Tashlich/Shofar Service will once again meet at Sycamore Park at 5:00 pm, as has been our custom for the last few years. This will immediately follow the Children's Service.

Family Service - We have added a Family Service for families with children aged five to 11 and their caregivers. Younger children are welcome to also join the Tot Service, and older children are invited to attend the Services in the Main Sanctuary. As a reminder, anyone of any age is permitted to join any of the Services. Adults find the Children and Tot Services very enjoyable and refreshing! We are Blessed to have Judith Markowitz lead the Family Services on both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Music and the Chazzanut - The last few years we have had to adjust and pivot with our Chazzanut group. Last year we lost about half of the singers due to a new strain of Covid. This year we are expecting a full group to fill the Sanctuary with music.

Community Yahrzeit Lighting - We invite anyone in the community who would like to light a yahrzeit candle to join us at 6:30pm on Erev Yom Kippur. The yahrzeit lights will remain lit in the sanctuary through Neilah.

Kol Nidre - DO NOT MISS THIS, LIVE AND IN PERSON. This may be one of the finest Kol Nidre recitations yet. There will be old friends, new friends, and even new instrumentalists. Online will not be the same experience.

Yahrzeit Candles - Traditionally we light these for the Kol Nidre service on Erev Yom Kippur. For many years now, Judith Markowitz and Glen Schabacker have provided our members with complimentary Yahrzeit candles for your loved one's Yahrzeit. This year they will also be providing candles during Rosh Hashanah so that you will have them to light before the Erev Yom Kippur service. They will be available in the BCC lobby.

Streaming - Last year several of your fellow members were disappointed at the lack of in-person attendance at our BCC Services. About one-third of our members chose to stay at home and watch. While we are still streaming, the more Community we have in the Sanctuary, the more impactful our Services will be. We hope you will join us in person.

Click [here](#) for all the HHD service timings.

Sukkot – The Time of Our Rejoicing

By Rabbi Dan Goldblatt

In our tradition, Sukkot, is called, *z'man simchateinu*, "the Time of Our Rejoicing." What is it exactly that we are supposed to rejoice? In ancient times it was the last harvest festival of the year and our people, mostly farmers, would gather in their crops before the winter rains. They would pack their things and head to Jerusalem for a week of reunions, celebrations, and time with relatives and friends before the roads became impassable and people would hunker down for the winter.

So, what is it that we gather to celebrate now? Every year we build our large, spacious, beautiful Sukkah and during the holiday, we gather together for a potluck dinner and brief evening service. We pass through the intensity of the High Holy Days and reflect on the harvest of our lives at this moment. We share our gratitude for the many wonderful things we often take for granted.

For many years, our Sukkah was the nicest structure that our community had built and inhabited. When we were guests at Danville Congregational Church, we would build the Sukkah out on their patio. We would invite our hosts to join us for a service, a meal, a gathering in OUR Sukkah. It was an intentionally flimsy structure, but it was our intentionally flimsy structure. We dreamed of the day when we would have our own synagogue home and be able to go out into our Sukkah to appreciate how far we had come as a community.

Now, sixteen years after we built our home, we gather in the Sukkah to remember and rejoice how far we have come. We gather in our Sukkah, a temporary shelter, to celebrate the connections, the relationships we share that have enriched our lives. The lights of the Sukkah sparkle and shine as evening falls and we simply sit and appreciate the journey we have taken from homelessness and wandering to our home on the hill. We have created a lovely container of memories and experiences. We have established a Jewish presence in our valley and have become respected and responsible stakeholders in our larger community.



Every year we invite our friends from I-SRV -- The Interfaith of the San Ramon Valley -- to meet in our Sukkah. It is perennially one of the most special gatherings of the year for this group. They love being hosted in our Sukkah and being welcomed into our history and our spiritual teachings. This year, the annual meeting of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County, an umbrella organization of more than 100 faith communities in our county will be held in our Sukkah. We will share with these friends the story of our people's wandering in the desert so long ago, and we will share the story of our Beth Chaim community's wandering and setting down Jewish roots here for future generations.

We have much to celebrate. Circle the date. **Saturday evening, September 30th at 6 pm.** Bring some food. Invite some friends to come with you. We will honor our extraordinary history and rejoice in Judaism coming alive in this special place where we live.

Simchat Torah – A Joy of Being Jewish

By Rabbi Dan Goldblatt

Every year on Simchat Torah we loudly declare the very last verse of the Torah to celebrate another cycle of sacred encounter with the story of our people. And before we can even catch our collective breath, we begin again – we sing out the very beginning, the first verses of Genesis. There is no more graphic way of celebrating Torah at the center of who we are.

The end of the Torah is an illusion. It would be like saying, I don't need to look into a mirror anymore because I know what I look like. Can you imagine the absurdity. We always need to seek out and discern good mirrors to help us remember who we are and the gifts we bring to our family, our friends, and our community.

The Torah has always functioned as such a good mirror for our people. We look into it to see ourselves more clearly. We look into it to appreciate our growth and development, our resiliency and our resourcefulness.

In our community, every Simchat Torah we unscroll the Torah and invite everyone present to hold it up so we can see its scope and its enormity. Once a year we take in the full wonder contained its sea of words and letters. We stand in awe of this ancient text that has the power to continue to inspire and challenge us to be our most authentic selves. And then ... we dance! What else should one do after fully unwrapping such a precious gift?

This year we are delighted to have Dorit Hoffman lead our dancing. Dorit has come to our sharing Shabbat Together evenings several times to lead and teach Israeli dancing. The many people who have come to these Shabbat evenings have enjoyed her direction and leadership.

But what if dancing is not your thing? No worries. Come and enjoy the vicarious pleasure that witnessing joyful dancing brings. There will be wonderful people to talk to and after the dancing we will go out into the Sukkah for our Oneg.

Our Simchat Torah celebration takes place on **Friday, October 6th**. This year we especially invite families with younger children to attend and this will also be a Ruach Service. We will be joined by our Song Leader, Rana Rines, who has boundless enthusiasm and irrepressible joy. Rana has the perfect energy for our Simchat Torah celebration.

We will move most of the chairs out of the sanctuary except for a circle of seats around the circumference of the space. It is a sweet and uplifting celebration. We embrace the sacred story of who we have been and honor how it has sustained us and leads us into the future. We make it our own and renew its lovely teachings and spiritual guidance. It will be something you don't want to miss. Be prepared to celebrate!



Rabbi Dan – A Legacy of Leadership, Light, and Love

By Andy Orgel

We were on a mission. A family of four, wandering Jews, newly moved to the East Bay desert, in search of a spiritual leader, a religious education for our children, some new friends, a place to find bagels and an occasional homemade kugel.

We searched for a temple. Found the only one in Danville, the town of our new home; called the phone number and arranged to meet with the President. He told me it probably wouldn't be the right place for us because there were new families, with young children, some members with alternative lifestyles (my edited words), a hole in the roof of the building that leaked when it rained and an inexperienced rabbi. It all sounded *perfect* to us.

Then we met the rabbi. After our first conversation, we knew this was the kind of community for us; and he was the kind of spiritual leader that represented our values, with a balanced approach to Judaism and commitment to social responsibility. He was sincere, warm, and inclusive. He was welcoming and made us feel comfortable.

The more we got to know him, the more we saw how caring, supportive, and compassionate he was to the young and the elderly, to those who considered themselves highly religious and those who were "Jewish-lite," to the interfaith families, interracial relationships, and those with various gender preferences. Nancy and I loved the variety of family structures, and our children benefitted from the exposure to all of them.

Dan opened our minds to appreciate each other. He opened our hearts to those who were different. And he opened our awareness to the cause-driven efforts to heal each other and heal the world.

The religious school grew and strengthened each year. A music program exploded within the school that delighted our kids, teachers, and parents.

We established the Brotherhood and Sisterhood, offered many adult education classes, lifelong learning opportunities, played baseball, ate together, prayed together, laughed together. We celebrated each other's b'nei mitzvot. Chesed gave so much to so many of us. And we supported each other during our most difficult times.

But this wasn't without challenges. Membership grew and shrank and grew again over the years. Managing the changes was difficult. Demands on the rabbi, board and financial management were significant. The pressures on all of us to evolve from a leaky roof to a beautiful home of which we could be proud were numerous, and ongoing. The level of volunteerism fluctuated from year to year, making it difficult to accomplish everything we needed. But the one constant through it all, for the past 30 years, was Rabbi Dan.

Through it all, Rabbi Dan fostered an environment of unity and inclusion; greater acceptance and respect for each other's viewpoints; creatively established a wealth of speakers, musical and visual artists and both meaningful and fun events.

For our family, Dan was there at our son's bar mitzvah, daughter's bat mitzvah, marriage of our daughter, through our health issues and during the deaths of Nancy's sister and all four of our parents. And, he has been there for us, and still is, through all of life's challenges in between.

He had a huge impact on our members. He inspired us. He encouraged us to be part of a true community. And he influenced that community to grow and prosper.

Please join us on Saturday, November 5th at 4:30 pm to celebrate the past 30 years of Beth Chaim and to thank our spiritual leader for providing the roadmap for building an incredibly special community.

Dan honored so many of us over the years, our families and our children. It's time for us to honor him for his leadership, light and love.

Confronting the Generational Anti-Jewish Movement

An Op-Ed by Michael Kolis, Director at Large (Advocacy)



During the same week in late July that the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania jury decided that the killer of 11 innocent souls at the Tree of Life Synagogue should be sentenced to death for his Jew-hate-driven murders, lowlife cowards littered the Iron Horse Trail in Danville with flyers espousing antisemitic conspiracy theories—their effort

to fuel additional Jew hate. The flyers are part of a generational effort to turn polite society against Jews. The effort is having success.

Spend an hour on social media, and you'll see that Jew hate and antisemitic conspiracy theories proliferate. Whereas online Jew hate was, for a time, relegated to shadowy, obscure websites and social media, now it is normalized and celebrated. Sure, feckless keyboard warriors are going to do what they do, but when do obscure social-media hate activists develop enough of a following to become legitimate public figures with persuasive societal impact?

Online antisemitism is by no means the province of only full-time devotees of the genre. When hip-hop megastar Cardi B recently experienced risk of legal trouble for throwing a microphone at an unruly concert fan, she tweeted to her 31 million followers a photo of two Hassidic men, with the boast "Remember." That was a reference to the lyrics from her 2018 song *Bickenhead*: "Lawyer is a Jew, he gon' chew up all the charges . . ." (Look up the rest of the lyrics at your own peril). In early August, entertainer Jamie Foxx posted on Instagram to his 16.8 million followers, "They killed this dude name Jesus... what do you think they'll do to you???" Mr. Foxx later deleted the post, explaining, "I want to apologize to the Jewish community and everyone who was offended by my post. I now know my choice of words ... caused offense and I'm sorry. That was never my intent. To clarify, I was betrayed by a fake friend and that's what I meant with 'they' not anything more." And with that bit of dissembling, all was forgiven.

You have seen in the news numerous instances where no-longer-shadowy anti-Jew hate groups have taken their efforts out into the daylight. Examples are legion of haters unfurling anti-Jew banners from highway overpasses. Of haters projecting messages of Jew hate onto stadium facades during major sporting events. Of swastikas and the like carved or spray-painted on synagogues and schools and otherwise prolifically across society. Of bomb threats and other threats of violence against synagogues. We used to be shocked at incidents like these. Now we are mostly inured to them. The incidents are part of the generational effort—and a result of that generational effort—to turn society against Jews.

The global anti-Jew effort is of a piece with the generational effort to undermine the State of Israel with false accusations of "apartheid," "colonization," and "white supremacy." Such accusations are part of a broadening, intercontinental campaign not merely to reform Israel but to eliminate it. The campaign for the destruction of Israel is rooted in and inextricably intertwined with antisemitism. Most Jews hold Israel in their hearts not only as a special and significant place, but also as a part of their Jewish identity. That puts the lie to banalities about "only anti-Zionism," and we shouldn't abide people who claim that they don't hate Jews, just Zionists. There is room to criticize Israel or some of the conduct of its government. But there is a line that can be crossed, too, and there is a name for those who will not support Israel's right to exist and the right of the Jews to have a homeland.

The undermining of Israel is now a feature of the U.S. Congress. It is common knowledge that the so-called "Squad," a group of leftist Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives, are vociferously anti-Israel, regularly voting and perseverating against anything supportive of Israel. Some of the Squad are outright antisemites.

They have millions of followers and impressionable constituents, and they are having an effect in Congress and otherwise. They recently co-opted our congressman, Mark DeSaulnier. On Israel's 75th Independence Day in April, the House passed a resolution celebrating the U.S.-Israel bond. The anodyne resolution didn't implement anything or cost even a dollar.

(continued on next page)

The resolution encouraged “the United States and Israel to continue to deepen and expand bilateral cooperation across the full spectrum of economic, security, and civilian issues . . .”; “the expansion and strengthening of the Abraham Accords to urge other nations to normalize relations with Israel . . .”; “continued support for security assistance to Israel as outlined in the United States-Israel Memorandum of Understanding to ensure that Israel can defend itself by itself”; and supported “Israel’s robust involvement as an active member of the community of nations to benefit Israel and the United States as partners who share common values and a commitment to democracy.” That was too controversial for the Squad, all of whom and a few others, voted against it. Among the “No” voters was our Rep. DeSaulnier. If you find Rep. DeSaulnier’s recent lack of support for Israel disappointing, you, as his constituent, should let him know.

I relate this episode to underscore that the generational effort against Jews and Israel is having success. We can imagine a Congress or a presidential administration that turns its back on Israel.

I regard the current phenomenon as societal anti-Jewish climate change. We ignore it at our peril.

Our Path Forward

What to do? I have a few ideas, and I welcome yours. If you shared with me your interest in working on our Hineni Network, I have your name. If you have not yet told me that you want to participate, let me know. We will get together this fall.

You are also aware that in May, the White House announced a [U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism](#). As Rabbi Dan described it in [his vlog](#), the strategy is a sweeping effort to engage numerous federal agencies and others in addressing antisemitism.

There are four “pillars” to the effort:

- Pillar 1: Increase awareness and understanding of antisemitism, including its threat to America, and broaden appreciation of Jewish American heritage.
- Pillar 2: Improve safety and security for Jewish communities.
- Pillar 3: Reverse the normalization of antisemitism and counter antisemitic discrimination.
- Pillar 4: Build cross-community solidarity and collective action to counter hate.

We should celebrate that the White House takes the issue of antisemitism seriously enough to implement the Strategy. The scope of the effort is impressive, even though much of the Strategy is aspirational and politicized and without the force of law. It is also sad that it has come to this, and it is unsurprising that there has been a responsive chorus of “you see, The Jews control the government.” Time will tell how effective the Strategy is; there may be much good as an outcome.

Finally, if you have kids heading back to college, or heading off to college for the first time, you may be concerned, as I am, about what they’ll face on campus. In addition to encouraging your student to join and spend time with the college Hillel or other Jewish organizations, here are some resources:

[American Jewish Committee Campus Library](#). AJC links several articles and resources for Jewish students and their families. You are certain to find something worthwhile here.

[AJC Student's Guide to Jewish Activism](#). AJC explains not necessarily activism, but students’ rights and how to confront antisemitism on campus.

[AJC Responding to False Claims About Israel](#). AJC provides guidance and information for those interested in countering false claims about Israel.

Shanah Tovah,
Michael Kolis mlkolis1218@gmail.com



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"It's not how much or how little you have that makes you great or small, but how much or how little you accomplish with what you have." - Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch

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Rabbi's Discretionary Fund | Torah Restoration & Sacred Objects

If you would like to make a donation you now can do so online using this [link](#). Every effort is made to individually acknowledge each donation by letter. If a donation is made in memory of someone the family is notified and if a donation is made to honor someone he or she is notified as well. The generous support of the synagogue made by member and non-member contributions is very much appreciated. Donations are listed by the donor's name followed by the honoree's name.

Community / General Fund

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Jeffrey Mueller	In memory of Robert Mueller, father of Jeff
Sisterhood	
Judith Markowitz & Glen Schabacker	
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Larry & Barbara Candeub	In memory of Lynn Katz
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Sisterhood

by Lois Kamoroff and Suzie Homer, Sisterhood Co-Presidents



Sisterhood hosted a wonderful Shabbat evening on June 23, led by Judith Markowitz. About 50 people attended and enjoyed an interactive service. The evening began with a delicious potluck dinner and ended with wine/cheese and desserts and lots of conversations.



We look forward to a New Year filled with our usual activities: Walking Group meets first Thursday of the month; Book Group, led by Deborah Blankfeld; our Rosh Chodesh group led by Deborah Wechsler; Ladies Who Lunch - many thanks to Janice Frankel who led the group since 2014, and is taking a break - Sandi Morris is stepping in to be the new coordinator; and our movie group that meets when there are interesting films the group would like to see.



September 8 Susi Cherry is hosting a flower arranging class at her home. She is a master gardener and has created beautiful arrangements for our community. Susi was responsible for the lovely flowers that we used as door prizes at our recent Sisterhood Shabbat Service. Rabbi Jamie Hyams is hosting her annual Sukkot celebration on Wednesday, October 4.

In early October we hope to do a Service Dog program with Susi Cherry, who has been a volunteer for that important organization. Sunday, September 10, Brotherhood and Sisterhood will be hosting a First Day of School for our Religious School families. Save Wednesday, December 6 for our annual Chanukah celebration, organized by our special events coordinators: Vikki Alpert and Jane Ware. Invitations and details will be coming shortly. Sisterhood is also looking forward to setting up a knitting and crochet group on Sunday mornings, led by Susan Volsky. Lessons will be available for those who would like to learn these skills.

Interested in getting more involved in Sisterhood? Contact Suzie Homer or Lois Kamoroff about leadership positions. Annual Sisterhood dues are now payable and are only \$40. The money collected is used to provide many extras for the Temple that we help support. You can pay online [here](#) or contact Audra Saul (audrasaul@hotmail.com) to arrange payment by check.

We look forward to seeing everyone at Friday night Shabbat Services and at our many social activities.

Chavurot at Beth Chaim Congregation

We currently have over 100 members connected through four active Chavurah groups. If you are looking to join a Chavurah group, please contact Debbie Roof at debbie.roof@yahoo.com



**chavurah* - a small group of friends who get together to socialize, celebrate and have fun. Joining a *chavurah* enriches your experience as members of Beth Chaim, through meaningful relationships and positive connections.

Brotherhood

by Burt Feldstein



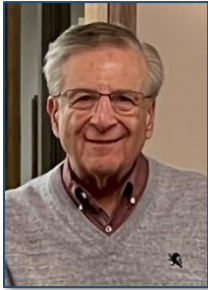
Beth Chaim
Brotherhood

What We Do Together Matters

Don't miss the Brotherhood Oktoberfest!

7th Annual Beer Tasting Event

Brotherhood has conducted a beer tasting event since 2017. This will be the 7th annual event. We thank Mark Yarkin for helping once again to arrange this fun event.



Mark says "Over the years, we have tasted all kinds of beers, but this year we are going to taste Porters and Stouts (i.e., dark beer). I have come to really enjoy dark beers, as opposed to IPA's. They are not heavy, even though they look heavy, and are lower in alcohol content than most beers. A certified beer judge will help choose the beers and they will all be very tasty. We will not do Guinness, as the Guinness beer is available everywhere and American Guinness does not compare to the Irish Guinness."



This will be a FREE event. We ask for a donation which will be used at the Brotherhood discretion. We may even do childcare if there is a need. Look for your invitation to RSVP, coming later in September.

PLEASE HELP! We need assistance putting up the Beth Chaim Sukkah on the patio. September 24, 9 am – Noon.

We Sang Out!

Some photos from *Summer Sing Out* on Friday, August 25



Membership

“... Community - in the fullest sense: a place and all its creatures - is the smallest unit of health” – Wendell Berry

Welcome New Members!

by Debbie Roof, Director, Membership



Since our last Star newsletter in July/August 2023, we have had three more new member families join Beth Chaim!

We also have quite a few families who are strongly considering joining Beth Chaim

and are planning to come to our Summer Sing Out and High Holiday Services. If you have any Jewish friends or relatives who are not affiliated with another temple, please invite them to come to our High Holiday services and events. We will have something for everyone – Adult services, Family services, and Tot services. These services are complimentary to nonmembers, they just need to call the office to register, and an optional donation is greatly appreciated.

This issue will feature the Doughtie family. In addition to them, the following families have recently joined Beth Chaim. When you see them at Beth Chaim at High Holidays or at other Beth Chaim community events, please welcome:

Moe Arrayed & Deborah Brachman

Dana & Jonathan Wikstrom, Dylan (10) & Benjamin (12) (grandchildren of member Susan Volsky)

Juli & Dan Kozak, (rejoined!) Adam (9), Maxwell (15), Madelyn (17) & Rachele (19)

As of August 2023, we have had 8 new families join Beth Chaim, including 12 young children: **Doughties, Rodmans, Netters, VanderBokkes, Ostomels, Wikstroms, Brachman/Arrayed, and Kozaks**. We are excited to have these new members!

Here is some interesting information about new members, the Doughtie family:

Beth Chaim: Tell us about your family:

Tiffani: Josh and I have three children. Our son Jaxson is six years old, in first grade at John Baldwin Elementary School in Danville. Our daughter Scarlett is four years old and attends Meadowlark Preschool. Next year she will be in kindergarten. Our youngest is seven-month-old Blakely.

I am the oldest of five siblings, and my family all lives close by. My parents live next door, with my youngest brother. Another brother lives around the block, and the other siblings are in Walnut Creek and Dublin. We are very close and do a lot together, along with the young cousins.

Beth Chaim: How did you and Josh meet?

Tiffani: Josh and I first met on Facebook, after a friend of mine introduced us. I was living in Sunnyvale at the time, working at Google, and Josh was finishing college at San Jose State.

Beth Chaim: Where did you both grow up?

Tiffani: I was born in Antioch, but my family moved to San Ramon when I was in middle school at Iron Horse. We were members of B'nai Torah in Antioch, and I continued to go back there for religious school and to have my Bat Mitzvah. Then I went to Cal High in San Ramon. I always wanted to come back to this area to raise a family. Josh and I moved back here in 2014 after we were married.

I went to college at San Francisco State, where I studied Broadcast Journalism. I was offered a job as a TV reporter in Minnesota, and I was also offered a contract at Google. I did not want to move to Minnesota, so I thought I would try Google out for one year, and I loved it. I have worked at Google now for 13 years. My role there is Executive Business Partner and Program Manager.

Josh is from Sacramento. He went to San Jose State, where he studied Criminal Justice. He was a police officer for a little while, and he is currently involved in Security. He works as Project Coordinator for physical security on site at Meta (Facebook). Josh is not Jewish, but we have both decided to raise our children Jewish.



(continued on next page)

Beth Chaim: What hobbies or activities do you like to do as a family?

Tiffani: We like to go fishing. Josh has taught our kids to fish, and they like to do that together. Our favorite way to travel is on family cruises with our extended family. I have been on “tons” of cruises, often to Mexico, the Caribbean, Alaska and other places. We also love going to Disneyland. Josh and I got engaged at Disneyland and went to Disney World for our honeymoon.

Beth Chaim: How did you hear about Beth Chaim?

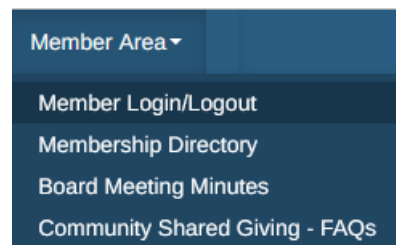
Tiffani: I have been to a lot of events with Lara Groch and PJ Library. We have made a lot of friends at Beth Chaim by going to Torah Tots and the High Holidays children’s services. Our kids are getting older, and we want them involved at Beth Chaim, and to have Bar and Bat Mitzvahs here. Some of my favorite memories growing up are having a Bat Mitzvah at B’Nai Torah in Antioch and going to the Bar and Bat Mitzvahs of my friends.

As soon as we joined Beth Chaim we were invited to join the Young Family Chavurah. I think it’s great that Beth Chaim is now a Reform Congregation. Hopefully more people will want to join Beth Chaim now.

How do I get a Beth Chaim Membership Directory?

Did you know that Beth Chaim has a Membership Directory? You can find contact information for your Beth Chaim friends! Available only to members, take the following steps to access the directory:

1. Go to the Beth Chaim website home page <https://www.bethchaim.com/>
2. Click on “Member Area” on the right side of the top navigation bar
3. Click on “Member Login/Logout”. Please log in to access members-only content. If you don't have a login, click the “**Don't Have An Account?**” link to register. Note that only BCC members will be allowed to register and your name will be checked against the membership rolls. It may take several days to receive your login.
4. Once you have logged in you will be able to click on “Membership Directory” and download a pdf. The Directory is updated regularly.



Social Action | Tikkun Olam

by Naomi Ehrlich, Director, Tikkun Olam



High Holy Day Food Collection *benefiting the* Contra Costa County Jewish Family and Community Services

Similar to the Passover food drive in the spring, Beth Chaim Congregation will be collecting boxes of tea and monetary donations to benefit the Contra Costa County Jewish Family and Community Services for their High Holy Day Food Drive. JFCS will be delivering meals to elderly adults, many of whom are disabled and/or Holocaust survivors. For many of them, this meal is their strongest connection to the holiday.

Please drop off the boxes of tea in the Beth Chaim office (not in the Food Bank bins in the lobby) or the Ehrlich home if it is easier.

For monetary donations, please click the PayPal button below or drop off a check at BCC (indicating High Holy Day Food Drive in the memo).

The due date for all items is September 8, 2023.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 925-890-3875. Thank you!

[Click here to sign up](#)

[Donate Via PayPal](#)



Milestones

"In any given moment we have two options: to step forward into growth or step back into safety."

- Abraham Maslow

Wedding Anniversaries

Names	Date	Years	Names	Date	Years
Neil & Bobbi Bernstein	Sept 1	55	Sam & Linda Eisenberg	Sept 26	13
Elliot & Lisa Bloom	Sept 1	27	Tom & Mary Day	Sept 27	36
Richard & Gayle Israel	Sept 1	32	David & Lynn Chazin	Sept 29	16
Martin & Karyn Fishman	Sept 2	39	Charlotte & Erik Gracer	Oct 4	20
Audra & Frederick Saul	Sept 2	22	Matthew & Robyn Valdivia	Oct 5	18
Daniel & Julie Benveniste	Sept 2	22	Ashley & Adam Heller	Oct 6	16
Adam & Elizabeth Leftik	Sept 5	14	Scott & Naomi Ehrlich	Oct 8	35
Stephen & Robin Rodman	Sept 6	8	John & Jody Dice	Oct 9	30
Samantha & Brian Hanlon	Sept 6	9	Bonnie & Keith Brors	Oct 10	36
Marc & Samantha Wechsler	Sept 6	26	Robert & Mally Netter	Oct 15	51
Denise Roberts & Gaurav Kapoor	Sept 7	15	David & Nanette Seltzer	Oct 15	45
Marc Mazer & Susan Talon-Mazer	Sept 7	37	William Fisher & Kathy Amiri	Oct 17	13
Kenneth & Marija Bleier	Sept 9	22	Andrew & Jill Porter	Oct 17	31
Brad & Rachel Goldblatt	Sept 9	33	Glenn & Julie Samson	Oct 20	33
David & Aurelia Lubinsky	Sept 11	26	Boris & Christina Kogan	Oct 29	12
David & Lindsay Van der Bokke	Sept 17	7	Greg & Debbie Wiener	Oct 29	35
Joey & Sabrina Kaminsky	Sept 19	6			
Aaron & Ashley Miller	Sept 23	11			

Children's Birthdays

Name	Birthday	Age
Nina Frank Manansala	Sept 3	9
Eli Kogan	Sept 6	6
Reid Abramowitz	Sept 7	14
Emerson Binder	Sept 10	9
Haley Blackman	Sept 10	16
Eva Kapoor	Sept 13	10
Eva Greenstein	Sept 14	14
Jacob Watkin	Sept 15	8
Emmerson Finder	Sept 27	17
Stella Levy	Sept 29	13
Jillian Wall	Oct 2	7
Adam Kozak	Oct 3	10
Graham Hertz	Oct 7	15
Rachael Simpson	Oct 7	12
Sophie Engelman	Oct 10	16
Maya Frank Manansala	Oct 10	11
Micah Leftik	Oct 30	8

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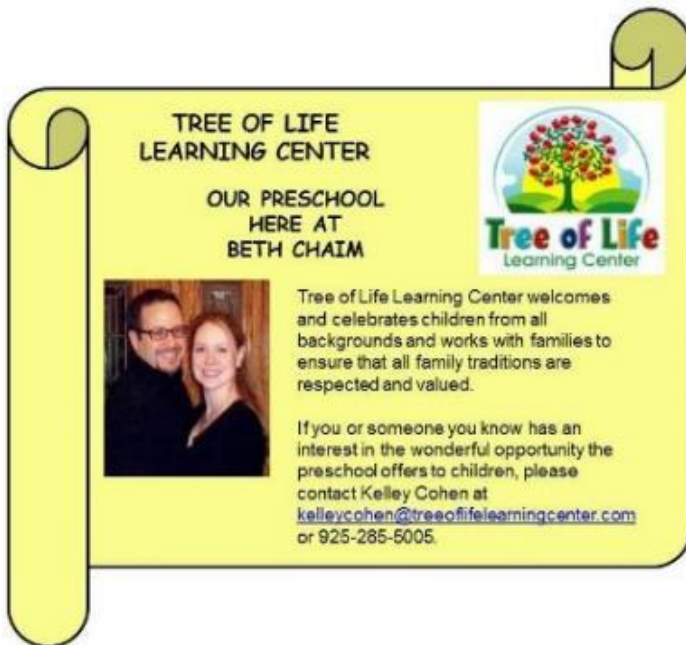
510.655.1977 3042 Claremont Ave Berkeley 94705

Membership Anniversaries

Names	Years	Names	Years
Eric & Eileen Kahn	31	Michael & Jessica Kolis	14
Rabbi Daniel Goldblatt	30	Larry & Cybille Scott	14
Jon Bronstein & Christa Joseph	30	Marc & Anne Feder	13
Andrew & Nancy Orgel	29	Michael & Sarah Karatov	13
Bob & Trish Slomowitz	29	Morgan & Deborah Becker	12
Judith Markowitz & Glen Schabacker	28	Joe & Michelle Gabriel	12
Beth Siegel	27	Elliot & Cameron Binder	10
Robyn & Jim Mizes	27	Michael & Frances Birnbaum	10
Jeff & Heidi Becker	25	Arnold & Ellie Gilbert	10
Leonard & Joanne Becker	25	Gene & Sarah Simpson	10
Kathie Bleier	25	Daniel & Julie Benveniste	9
Martin & Karyn Fishman	25	Yoel & Julie Cohen	9
Tanya & Donald James	25	Jamie & Michael Hyams	9
Evan & Stacey Levy	25	Hayuta & Maheesh Jain	9
Paul & Patricia Yamshon	25	Charlotte & Erik Gracer	8
Deborah Wechsler & Bruce Bilodeau	24	Matthew & Robyn Valdivia	8
Rae & Jonathan Corr	24	Rabbi Ira Book	7
Martin & Lisa Goldberg	24	Craig & Melissa Rosenblatt	7
Brad & Janet Lieber	24	Lee Rosenblatt	7
Glenn & Julie Samson	24	Elaine & Herb Lederman	7
Lisette Bridges	23	Gregory & Kristen Heiden	6
William Fisher & Kathy Amiri	22	Daniel & Julie Kozak	6
Andrew & Jill Porter	22	Jeffrey & Nancy Levin	6
Sally Klein	22	Yael & Yaniv Benaroya	6
Andy & Laura Benn	21	Andrew & Tanya Dublin	6
Marci Piccus	21	Melissa & David Mann	6
Sara Goldstein	21	Fran & Dale Patterson	5
Mark & Terri Yarkin	20	Stephanie & Mark Abramowitz	5
Pamela & David Messing	19	Susan Homer	5
Grace & Carlos Munoz	19	Boris & Christina Kogan	4
Adam & Kelly Holden	18	Shelley Norman & Marshall Berman	4
David & Lynn Chazin	17	Jane & Gary Ware	3
Bob & Sandy Shalon	16	Serena Piazza & Sushil Rajendran	3
Amy & Marc Badain	16	Dimitry & Helen Goldshteyn	3
Marc & Samantha Wechsler	15	Sam & Linda Eisenberg	3
Mark Garetz & Ellen Rosenbluth	15	Barbara Gravinese	3
Dave & Kimberly Kamalman	15	Yana Greenstein & Boris Yankilovich	2
David & Aurelia Lubinsky	15	Ben & Sarah Shapiro	2
Rich & Diana Weil	15	Julia & Dave Abelmann	2
Aaron & Roberta Gabriel	14	Ariel Frank & Frederico Manansala	2
Larry & Barbra Candeub	14	Breanna Dodd	2


Education

T'lamed Ve'Tilamed (You shall teach and you shall learn)



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LEARNING CENTER**

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HERE AT
BETH CHAIM



Tree of Life Learning Center welcomes and celebrates children from all backgrounds and works with families to ensure that all family traditions are respected and valued.


If you or someone you know has an interest in the wonderful opportunity the preschool offers to children, please contact Kelley Cohen at kelleycohen@treeoflifelearningcenter.com or 925-285-5005.

Tree of Life Learning Center is a private, family-owned, developmentally based Jewish preschool, offering full-day, part-day, and school-day programs for children ages 2 – 5 years-old.



Director: Kelley Cohen

[Kelleycohen@treeoflifelearningcenter.com](mailto:kelleycohen@treeoflifelearningcenter.com)

Torah Tots and Tot Shabbat



Join PJ Library Parent Connector **Ema Lara**, and music leader Tkiya at Beth Chaim Congregation for anyone with little ones ages 0-5!



Torah Tots

Sundays

10:00am

Oct. 15

Dec. 3



Tot Shabbat

Fridays

5:30pm

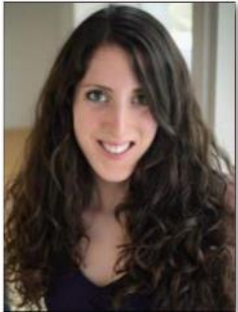
Oct. 6

Nov. 3



BCC is proud of its religious school program serving pre-school through high school. We offer Torah Tots, Sunday School for ages 5+, B'nei Mitzvah Program, Madrichim Program, and a robust teen program in partnership with Contra Costa Midrasha.

Grades K-7



Shelby Margolin
Principal, Beit Midrash

The month of Elul and our High Holidays are always an especially sacred time for me. The spiritual preparations carve out time for me to reflect on myself and my relationships, appreciate what is working in my life, and identify ways that I need to grow. Because I've always worked in education, this spiritual time always falls around the start of a

new school year. Judaism therefore gives me a way to use these practices in my professional and personal life simultaneously!

Our staff retreat kicks off the year and will focus on creating an even deeper and cohesive curriculum. We will begin by reflecting on the magic teachers create in their classrooms and share what learning modalities are working between grades. Thanks to a grant from the Contra Costa Jewish Community Foundation, facilitators from Jewish Learning Works will facilitate our staff meetings to introduce innovative curriculum being done across the country and identify what will work at Beth Chaim. This will be a year-long journey culminating in a curriculum guide that we can use from year-to-year. I am so grateful to have such a heartfelt, creative, and compassionate staff to move through this process with!

In addition to our curriculum, we are also growing our programming to provide more options for our community. This year we will have Family High Holy Day Services for families with children in grades 1st-5th, as well as our Tot High Holy Day services for families with younger children. 6th and 7th grade students will benefit from attending our morning service with Rabbi Dan to practice their prayers and experience a full service! Our Family Service, led by our beloved community leader Judith Markowitz and our spirited song leader Rana Rines, will begin at 2:30 pm on both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Our Tot service, led by musical puppeteers from Tkiya, will begin at 3:30 pm on both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. I hope to see our entire Beit Midrash community at one of these three services!

Speaking of growth, no one will grow more this year than our incoming 7th grade class as they become a Bar or Bat

Mitzvah! My Bat Mitzvah year was one of the most sacred years of my life, and I am honored that I get to help each student and family experience this special simcha in a way that is meaningful for them. Our B'nei Mitzvah program is full of opportunities for students to delve into reading and chanting Torah, leading tefillah, and working closely with Rabbi Dan on what it means to become a Jewish adult. Our Beit Midrash students also will be more involved in celebrating each 7th grader to support their classmates *and* get excited for their own Bar/Bat Mitzvah. I look forward to working with each 7th grade family to ensure students have a unique and individually fulfilling experience.

We have a truly exceptional staff this year. I am thrilled to welcome Ellen Seversen back as our 7th grade teacher! Ellen has been with our community for years. Ellen has an uncanny ability to connect with students individually and provide experiences that bond students together as a class. I'm equally excited to welcome our 3rd grade teacher and newest staff member, Leo Pedersen! Leo works as a youth educator for Wilderness Torah and brings a wealth of experience to our community. I am so appreciative that our veteran teachers will return to lead our classes *and* our curriculum project—Ava Pedersen (K), Lara Groch (1), Kathleen Rubinfeld (2), Alice Tankel (4/5), Grace Munoz (6), Samantha Hanlon (Hebrew), Lori Troyanovsky (Hebrew), and Tal Sendrovitz (Hebrew)! Rana Rines, our musical director, will also be back, in addition to the heartbeat of our program, also known as our School Administrator, Alex Lofrese. Violet Brors, former student and madricha, will also join our staff as our Sunday School Coordinator!

We are in for an exciting year, and I'd love to invite anyone from the community to experience a taste of our Beit Midrash Magic! Please email me if you'd like to visit our Sunday School or share one of your special gifts with our children.

With Love and Gratitude,
L'shana Tova,

Morah Shelby Meyer Margolin (she/her/hers)

Principal, Beth Chaim Beit Midrash

Beth Chaim Beit Midrash

educator@bethchaim.com



High Holy Day Family and Tot Services

Rosh Hashanah

Saturday, Sept. 16

Family Service

2:30pm



Tot Service

3:30pm

Yom Kippur

Sunday, Sept. 25

Family Service

2:30pm

Tot Service

3:30pm



Family Service is an interactive musical service for families with children in 1st – 5th grades

Tot Service is an interactive service with music, puppets, dancing and stories for families with children ages 0-5



Contra Costa Midrasha functions as Beth Chaim's teen program, and Beth Chaim makes an annual per student contribution to augment the tuition and retreat fees of Midrasha.

Grades 8-12

By Devra C. Aarons, Executive Director, CCM

Launching 2023-24/5784 off right!

We launch 2023-24 on the heels of an amazing 10-day Mifgash adventure combining 26 Midrasha teens and a cohort of 13 Israeli teens from the Holtz Academy in Tel Aviv. Whether it was walking the streets of San Francisco, hanging out at the beach, ziplining through the Sequoia redwood canopies or spending Shabbat together, we saw three amazing things happen. One: the teens bonded, creating new friendships and a growing understanding of each other's lives. Two: we all learned more about Jewish life in America and life in Israel. Three: These connections will serve both groups of teens well into the future. *Now it's time to think about Winter, when we travel to Israel with our Midrasha teens for the reciprocal trip. To find out more visit ccmidrasha.com/mifgash.*

Parents of pre-teens and teens, mark your calendars for two engaging opportunities to learn about the growing and ever-changing teen brain! Through a grant from

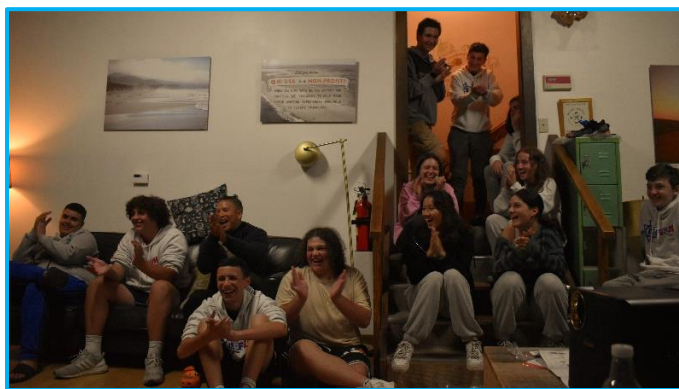


Devra Aarons,
CCM Director

As always, spread the love about Contra Costa Midrasha! Let the teens in your life know about Midrasha and our myriad of programs. Schedule a time to talk with our Director, [Devra Aarons](mailto:Devra.Aarons@ccmidrasha.com) or check out our website at ccmidrasha.com. There's something for every teen!

“Scientists in Synagogues” Contra Costa Midrasha will host two events this year: December 20th and April 14th for community learning about teen brain development with the scientists who study it and the educators who teach our teens. Mark your calendars for these events - all are welcome!

CCM'S NEWEST INITIATIVE!
THE TEEN BRAIN
 ...A SERIES OF WORKSHOPS FOR PARENTS, TEENS & EDUCATORS IN 2023-24
 SAVE THE DATE FOR THESE PARENT WORKSHOPS:
 DEC. 20, 2023
 APRIL 14, 2024
 MADE POSSIBLE BY GENEROUS FUNDING FROM:
 Sinai and Synapses
 Scientists in Synagogues



CCM's 2023-24 year starts August 30th with 8th & 9th Grade Orientation and September 6 for Opening Night! (And registration is now open.) We've launched our 2023-24 year! Teens entering grades 8-12 are invited to check out Midrasha late this summer. To learn more about all Midrasha has to offer, or to register, visit our brand-new website at ccmidrasha.com.

Know a teen who wants to change the world today? We invite them to consider one of our three Tikkun Olam (Repair the World) projects.

1. *Better Together* connects teens with elders in our community to learn about each other, alleviate loneliness and isolation and to share in small service projects.

2. *Hamsa Fund* empowers teens to create their own philanthropic Foundation. Over the year teens pick an issue, learn about it, fundraise for it, then distribute funds to non-profits who serve individuals impacted by their chosen issue.
3. *Impact Builder* teens go out into our community doing service projects around an issue they care about at one non-profit for the whole year.

This year we are adding a Spring Break trip in Los Angeles for all teens to dive deep into the world of Tikkun Olam.

What else is happening at Midrasha?

- **Retreats begin in November!**
- **Save the Date for our 2024 Gala on February 24th!**

Yahrzeits

Zichronam L'vracha – May Their Memories be a Blessing

Name	Date	Observed By	Relationship
Stephanie Krantz	Sep 2	Julie Samson	Mother of Julie
Bruce Semigran	Sep 3	Bonnie Brors	Brother of Bonnie
Yael Goldblatt	Sep 4	Daniel Goldblatt	Wife of Dan
Sam Katz	Sep 4	William Katz	Father of William
Andrew Oshay	Sep 4	Rick Oshay	Father of Rick
James Biben	Sep 6	Marc Badain	Step-Father of Marc Badain
David Jarcho	Sep 6	Shelley Fox	Father of Shelley
Danielle Angelo	Sep 7	Brien & Marni Angelo	Daughter of Brien & Marni
Bobby Gallagher	Sep 7	Catherine Heller	Brother of Catherine
Marylyn Graff	Sep 7	Ellen Waltrip	Mother of Ellen
Bertram Kamalman	Sep 8	Dave Kamalman	Father of Dave
Lillian Waxman	Sep 9	Steve Waxman	Mother of Steve
Yvonne Thompson	Sep 11	Michael Thompson	Mother of Michael
Jack Bach	Sep 14	Marty Bach	Father of Marty
Barbara Davidson	Sep 14	Darrell Davidson	Mother of Darrell
Joseph Shulman	Sep 14	Jeffrey Shulman	Father of Jeff
Hilda McClelland	Sep 15	Jill Porter	Mother of Jill
Phillip Sklar	Sep 15	Bobbi Bach	Father of Bobbi
Esther Weil	Sep 17	Rich Weil	Mother of Rich
Stanley Benn	Sep 21	Andy Benn	Father of Andy
Benjamin Klein	Sep 21	Art Klein	Father of Art
Benjamin Gabrilowitz	Sep 22	Joe Gabriel	Father of Joe
Roy Abramowitz	Sep 25	Mark Abramowitz	Father of Mark
William Dodge	Sep 25	Lisa Goldberg	Father of Lisa
Harriet Churgel	Sep 26	Ellen Waskey	Mother of Ellen
Lillian Straus	Sep 26	Frances Birnbaum	Mother of Fran
Sol Malvern Dorinson	Sep 26	Mary Day	Father of Mary
Arlene Sarver	Sep 27	Diane Sarver-Davidson	Mother of Diane
Donald Rosenberg	Sep 28	Dave Rosenberg	Father of Dave
Howard Blankfeld	Sep 30	Deborah Blankfeld	Father of Deborah
Ellen Wechsler	Oct 1	Marc Wechsler	Mother of Marc
Michael Todtenkopf	Oct 2	Tanya Lombardi	Brother of Tanya
Ellen Feldstein	Oct 3	Burt Feldstein	Wife of Burt
Ken Tronstad	Oct 3	KT Waxman	Father of KT
Annette Erlick	Oct 4	Tony Erlick	Mother of Tony
Harriet Lieber	Oct 5	Brad Lieber	Mother of Brad
Bunny Roof Krolek	Oct 7	Richard Roof	Mother of Richard
Joseph Henig	Oct 8	Lynn Binger	Father of Lynn
Abraham Straus	Oct 10	Frances Birnbaum	Father of Fran
Jeanne Dorinson	Oct 10	Mary Day	Mother of Mary
Adele Rosenbluth	Oct 10	Ellen Rosenbluth	Mother of Ellen
Bertram Rothman	Oct 12	Nadine Rosenzweig	Father of Nadine

Yahrzeits, cont'd

Zichronam L'vracha – May Their Memories be a Blessing

Name	Date	Observed By	Relationship
Calvin Zieky	Oct 14	Pamela Messing	Father of Pam
Marshall Ruderman	Oct 15	Steven Richard Ruderman	Father of Steven
Christopher Carter	Oct 16	Tim Carter	Brother of Tim
Marvin Weckstein	Oct 17	Lou Weckstein	Father of Lou
Don Cherry	Oct 18	Ray Cherry	Father of Ray
Bunny Eiges	Oct 20	Peter Eiges	Mother of Peter
Stanley William Graff	Oct 20	Ellen Waltrip	Father of Ellen
Lawrence Fisher	Oct 21	William Fisher	Father of William
Sylvia Shalon	Oct 24	Bob Shalon	Mother of Bob
Bobby Kelley	Oct 28	Kathie Bleier	Brother of Kathie
Frada Garetz	Oct 31	Mark Garetz	Mother of Mark



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BAR/BAT MITZVAH VIDEOGRAPHER. Recent graduate of the Art Institute of San Francisco Brian Hanlon is partnering with his wife and longtime BCC member and Hebrew School teacher Samantha Waxman to record your service or party. Contact us at samanthabhanlon@gmail.com or hanlon86@yahoo.com.

ACTIVITY THERAPIST. Do you have a loved one living with MCI, or Alzheimer's or other dementia? Do you have a loved one living with a terminal diagnosis? We provide 1 to 1 ongoing support for people in need in Contra Costa County. 10+ years experience connecting with elders through music, art, spiritual care, emotional support and help with end-of-life planning. Contact Z*O*E Activity Therapies (510) 926-4329, zoe@activitytherapies.org; www.activitytherapies.org.

"SPECIAL FOR SHABBAT" is written by long time professional writer and Beth Chaim member, Michelle Gabriel. The book follows the story of a little girl who finds meaning in Shabbat and challah when she discovers the beauty of both, especially for the challah that was baked special for Shabbat. A sweet story with engaging illustrations for young children. mjgwrites@yahoo.com or mjgpress.com



"ARI'S JOURNEY" a novel by late Beth Chaim member Norman Binger, is now available on Amazon.com, including as a Kindle book. Ari Cohen, an Israeli Police officer, embarks on a perilous journey to save his son from terrorists. On his odyssey he meets friends and enemies, both Palestinian and Israeli, and encounters a long-lost love.

MEMORY ALBUMS. Do you need help organizing your photos? Would you like to preserve your family memories so they can be passed on to your children and their children? Whether it's baby's first year, B'nei Mitzvah, graduation, weddings, special vacations, and more, I can preserve these memories for you or teach you how to do it. Call Melinda Bandler on 829-0782, or e-mail mhandler@pacbell.net, for a free 1-hour consultation.

CUSTOM QUILTS. One-of-a kind gifts of Jewish art. Great for B'nei Mitzvah graduation, anniversary, and wedding gifts. A letter of the Aleph Bet or Star of David quilted wall hanging, blanket, or chuppah that will last from generation to generation. Examples of each can be seen at BCC or my art studio. Choose your favorite colors or I can help you decide. Letters are \$324 for 28" x 31." Stars are \$486 approx. 55" x 59". \$54 will be donated to BCC for each piece purchased. Contact Barb Carpenter via email: RenaZimmermanDesigns@gmail.com or 925-838-8371. <http://www.renazimmermandesigns.com>.

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