



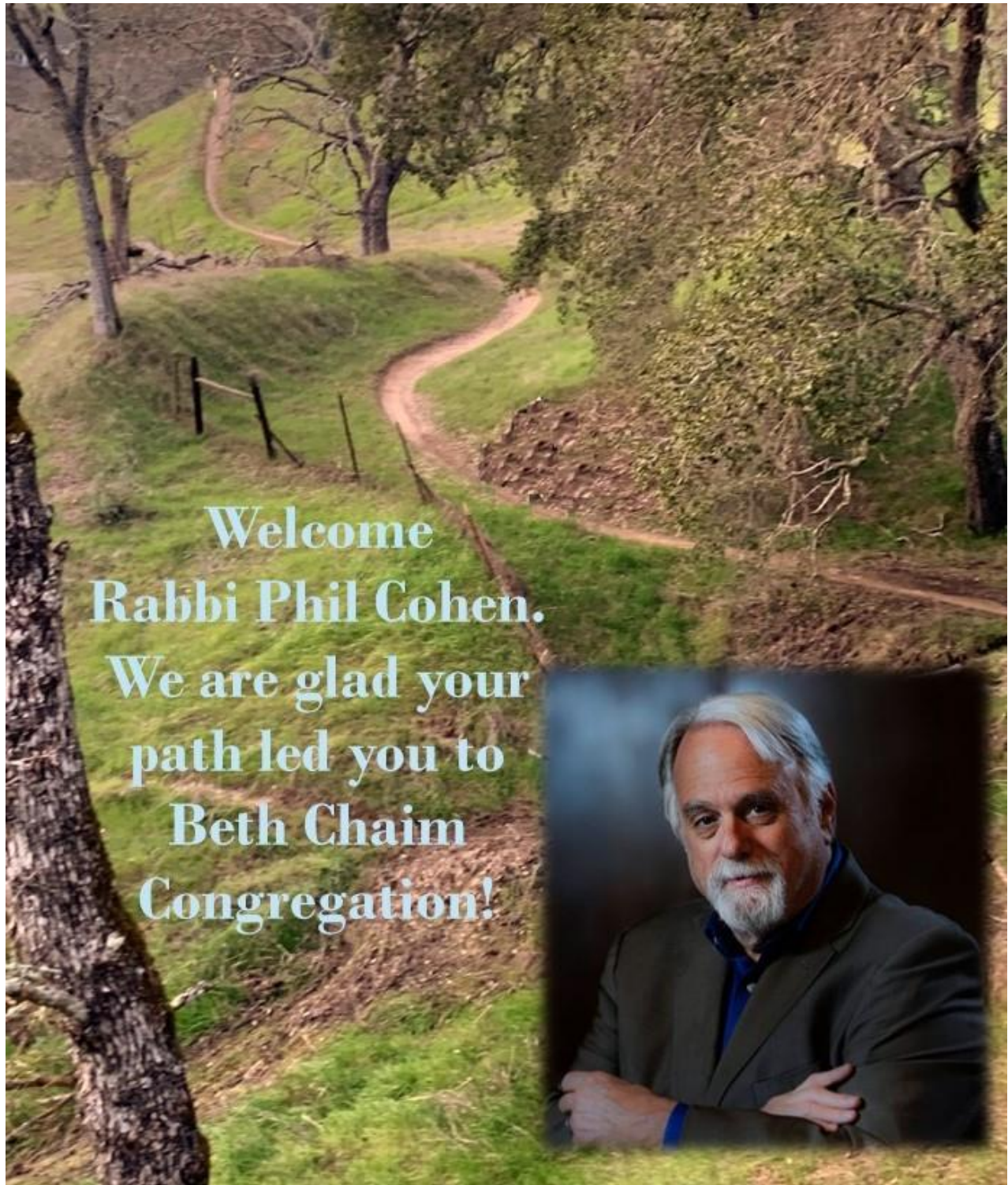
BETH
CHAIM
CONGREGATION

Celebrating
Spiritual
Community
Since 1978

THE STAR

VOLUME 46 | ISSUE 4 | JULY/AUGUST 2024

SIVAN/TAMMUZ/AV 5784



Welcome
Rabbi Phil Cohen.
We are glad your
path led you to
Beth Chaim
Congregation!

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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://bethchaim.com/news/>.

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.

COMING SOON! Events not to miss in July and August

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 |
|-----------|--|---------------------|----------|--------------------------|
| JULY 1 | Genealogy Club | Monday | 7:00 PM | BCC |
| JULY 4 | Sisterhood Monthly Walking Group | Thursday | 9:30 AM | Lunardi's Parking Lot |
| JULY 4, 5 | Office Closed – Memorial Day | Thursday and Friday | | |
| JULY 9 | Sisterhood Rosh Chodesh Gathering | Tuesday | 7:00 PM | Home of Deborah Wechsler |
| JULY 12 | Sisterhood-sponsored Shabbat with Rabbi Phil Cohen | Friday | 6:00 PM | BCC |
| JULY 13 | Brotherhood Dessert and Bocce Ball Night | Saturday | 7:00 PM | Sycamore Bocce Courts |
| JULY 16 | Sisterhood Book Club | Tuesday | 7:00 PM | Home of Leslie Diamond |
| JULY 19 | Sharing Shabbat Together | Friday | 6:00 PM | BCC |
| JULY 26 | Sharing Shabbat Together | Friday | 6:00 PM | BCC |
| AUG 1 | Sisterhood Monthly Walking Group | Thursday | 9:30 AM | Lunardi's Parking Lot |
| AUG 2 | Sharing Shabbat Together | Friday | 6:00 PM | BCC |
| AUG 5 | Genealogy Club | Monday | 7:00 PM | BCC |
| AUG 6 | Sisterhood Rosh Chodesh Gathering | Tuesday | 7:00 PM | BCC |
| AUG 9 | Sharing Shabbat Together | Friday | 6:00 PM | BCC |
| AUG 13 | Tisha B'Av | | | |
| AUG 16 | Sharing Shabbat Together | Friday | 6:00 PM | BCC |
| AUG 17 | Maya Benaroya Bat Mitzvah | Saturday | 10:00 AM | BCC |
| AUG 19 | Tu B'Av | | | |
| AUG 20 | Sisterhood Book Club | Tuesday | 7:00 PM | TBD |
| AUG 23 | Summer Sing Out & Shabbat Services | Friday | 5:30 PM | BCC |
| AUG 30 | Sharing Shabbat Together | Friday | 6:00 PM | BCC |

Ongoing Weekly Activities

| | | | |
|--|------------|---------|---------|
| Religious School (will resume September 8) | Sundays | | BCC |
| 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.



Editor's Note

by Deborah Wechsler

Our community newsletter, the Beth Chaim Star, is published six times each year. Regular sections include:

| | |
|--|---|
| What's Happening Next (Calendar) | Gratitude Notes and Donations |
| President's Letter | PreK: PJ Library / Torah Tots / Tree of Life |
| Rabbi articles | Beit Midrash, Bnei Mitzvah, Contra Costa Midrasha |
| Spiritual Life / Jewish Holidays / Lifelong Learning | Yahrzeits |
| Articles about recent activities pref. with photos | Wedding & Member Anniversaries; Kids' Birthdays |
| Membership | Simchas (Weddings, Births, etc) |
| Sisterhood & Brotherhood | |

The deadline for submitting articles is the 20th of the month preceding publication, as follows:

| | |
|--|---|
| January (1st week) for Jan/Feb issue due Dec 20 | July 1 for July/August issue due June 20 |
| March 1 for Mar/Apr issue due Feb 20 | Sept 1 for Sept/Oct issue due Aug 20 |
| May 1 for May/June issue due Apr 20 | Nov 1 for Nov/Dec issue due Oct 20 |

Please contact me (debwex52@yahoo.com) with your thoughts and ideas for regular sections or special articles.

Looking for a way to connect your creative talents to your community at Beth Chaim? We are looking for a new or assistant editor for The Star Newsletter. Please contact Deborah (debwex52@yahoo.com) to find out more details.

Special Events and Workshops



*Please join us in welcoming
Rabbi Phil Cohen and his wife Betsy Gamburg
as Rabbi Phil leads his first community Shabbat service
at Beth Chaim as our new interim Rabbi.*

Friday, July 12, 2024

*6:00 PM Complimentary Israeli Dinner
sponsored by Beth Chaim Sisterhood*

*7:00 PM Services at Beth Chaim
followed by Dessert Oneg*

RSVP

Beth Chaim



Brotherhood

Brotherhood Sponsored Bocce Ball Night
at Sycamore Valley Park (next to Beth Chaim)
Saturday, July 13, 2024 - 7-10 pm • Adults over 21 only.

Beth Chaim members and guests welcome!

RSVP Not Required



**BETH CHAIM'S 4TH ANNUAL**

Summer Sing Out Shabbat Style!

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 23TH
5:30-7:30PM
ON THE BETH CHAIM PATIO**

Join the Beth Chaim Community for an intergenerational Shabbat Service "Jewish Summer Camp" style!

Pack a picnic dinner, blanket and chairs, and we'll provide the Ruach and the ICE CREAM!!!

Get ready for a night of musical fun led by Rabbi Phil Cohen and Song Leader Rana Rines



Reach for the Stars



Join us for our annual fundraiser honoring *Larry Candeub*

Saturday, September 21, 2024 | 6pm

Cocktails • Strolling Dinner • Dessert
Silent Auction • Entertainment

More information coming soon!



Israel – Resources for Education and Action



Click [here](#) for important information on fighting antisemitism including how to report online antisemitism at work, social media, or community instances.

JEWISH COMMUNITY RESOURCE COUNCIL RESOURCES:

If you or someone you care about needs assistance emotionally, please call JFCS's Bay Area Critical Helpline at 415-449-3700

Click [here](#) for additional resources from JCRC.

Take action now using one of our [campaigns](#)!

SUPPORT FOR HOSTAGES AND THEIR FAMILIES

[Bring Them Home Now. DOWNLOAD AND PRINT POSTERS](#)

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES:

K - 12:

- [JCRC Guidance for Jewish Parents Organizing](#)
- [Talking to Children About Violence in Israel](#)
- [How to Talk to Children About Israel Today \(video\)](#)
- [Support for Classroom Discussion on the Hamas-Israel War](#)

Higher Education:

- [Sample University Community Letter](#)
- [Campus Antisemitism Legal Line \(CALL\)](#)
- [14 facts about hamas every college student needs to know](#)
- [Facts every college student needs to know about Israel](#)

CREDIBLE NEWS SOURCE: [Times of Israel Live Blog](#)



Rabbi Phil's Thoughts

By Rabbi Phil Cohen

It's an odd way to work as a rabbi, this interim life. Travelling from town to town, from region to region for a year at a time, perhaps two. First, obviously, you have to find a synagogue interested in your services. Once coming to an agreement, you must find a place to live, learn a new zip code, find new doctors, find a new gym. You have to find a new Chinese restaurant, hopefully a good Thai one, too. You have to learn a whole new bunch of people's names. Above all, the interim rabbi has to learn, chick-chock, as much about the ways of his new congregation as quickly as possible.

It's definitely an odd way to be a rabbi.

But the rewards, I've found over the six years I've engaged in this work, are immense.

I'll begin with the externals, the new places. Through this work I've tasted Chicago, Indianapolis, St. Louis, LA. And now San Francisco lies at my feet. I've experienced, obviously, the towns in which my congregations are located, as well, West Lafayette, IN, Columbia, MO, Riverside, CA. There's a book in all of this moving about, which someday I intend to write.

My wife, Betsy Gamburg, joined me last year in this nationwide trek, having retired from her position as director of Jewish Family Services in Greensboro, NC in March 2023. In my last position, in Riverside, CA, she became an active member of the synagogue community in several different capacities.

The real reward of this work lies in the congregations themselves. As I've said in interviews, I fly in like Mary Poppins, help everyone see their lives somewhat differently, sing a few new songs, and at the end of the year, I fly out. At the end of this year, we'll likely fly to Greensboro, NC, our permanent home, where I'll settle down to write novels and scholarship.

What I especially love about interim work lies in its invitation to experience diversity. Each synagogue, mindfully or not, possesses its own unique culture, its own special annual events, its own rituals that flow

naturally from the Jewish calendar and the unique nature of each shul. Each synagogue I've served in this capacity has its own entrée into the holy, those moments over the year that celebrate and experience the relationship between God and the Jewish people, between God and all men and women, between God and the world. Each synagogue worships the same God, but somewhat differently as bespeaks the nature of the individual place.

But I have to say that the single most wonderful gift this life has offered me, and now Betsy, are the many friends we have made along the way. As an interim rabbi I have met so many interesting and loving people that I can say without equivocation our lives would be different and poorer without our many new friends. It's fair to hope that my journey has helped and perhaps in small ways changed the congregations I have served for the better. I can say with certainty that my life would be quite different, and much diminished, had I not trod this path.

And beginning July 1, a few days ago, Betsy and I have become members of BCC with the opportunity to experience the spiritual life of Beth Chaim Congregation, to see firsthand what makes this house of worship so special, to meet the folks who make BCC their spiritual home. We are looking forward to becoming a part of this house of worship and making friends with its members.

Please feel free to be in touch.

Phone: 716 481 7929; Email: ravbccca@yahoo.com



Tisha B'Av

Excerpted from MyJewishLearning.com

Tisha B'Av, the ninth of the month of Av, is a day of mourning for Jews. It is the day Jews remember the destruction of both Temples that once stood in Jerusalem as well as a number of other tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people over the course of history.

A three-week mourning period preceding Tisha B'Av begins on the 17th day of the month of Tammuz. According to the Mishnah, this was the day the Romans succeeded in breaching the walls of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.; the Mishnah also mentions other tragic events that occurred on this day in Tammuz. Traditional Jews do not get married or celebrate other joyous festivities in these three weeks.

Nine days prior to Tisha B'Av, a new period of more intense mourning begins. Traditional Jews do not eat meat, cut their hair, or wash their clothes unless they are to be worn again during the nine days. All these actions are considered signs of joy or luxury inappropriate for this time of mourning. Reform, Reconstructionist, and Conservative Jews adopt a varied range of these practices.

The Shabbat immediately preceding the festival is *Shabbat Hazon* (vision). The name derives from the *haftarah* (prophetic reading) for the day. Taken from Isaiah 1, the reading describes Isaiah's vision of national disaster befalling the Israelites because of their sins.

Tisha B'Av is a full fast day, so the last meal must be eaten before sunset prior to the ninth of Av. In addition to abstaining from food or drink during Tisha B'Av, Jewish tradition also mandates refraining from wearing leather, engaging in sexual relations, washing one's body, and using perfume or other such ointments. Visiting cemeteries on this day is encouraged, as if to heighten the sadness.

Uniquely on Tisha B'Av, Torah study, meant to be joyful, is not permitted. Some parts of the Bible or Talmud are allowed, like Job or Jeremiah, or sections of the Talmud or Midrash that discuss the destruction of Jerusalem. In the synagogue, the lights are dimmed and the ornamental *parokhet* (covering) is removed from the ark as a sign of mourning before the evening service. Congregants remove their leather shoes and do not greet each other.

Megillat Eicha (the Scroll of Lamentations)—which is a lament for the destruction of the First Temple — is chanted during the Maariv service, along with several *kinot*, elegies or dirges written at different periods of Jewish history. The *kinot* speak of the suffering and pain of Jewish tragedy through the ages. An extended set of *kinot* are traditionally recited during the morning service, and some communities repeat the chanting of *Eicha* in the morning as well. The traditional Torah reading is Deuteronomy 4:25-40 and the *haftarah* is Jeremiah 8:13-9:23, which is chanted to the same tune as Lamentations the night before.

The meal ending the fast traditionally omits meat and wine, in acknowledgment of the fact that the burning of the Temple continued until the next day. Finally, the sorrow that began on the 17th of Tammuz comes to a halt and the Shabbat immediately following Tisha B'Av is called *Shabbat Nahamu* (Shabbat of comfort) because the *Haftarah* begins with the words "*nahamu nahamu ami*" ("comfort, comfort my people"). This begins a period of consolation and comfort leading up to Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year.



Image by [Zsóka Vehofszics](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Tu B'Av – the “Jewish Valentine’s Day”

Excerpted from MyJewishLearning.com

Tu B'Av, the 15th Day of Av, is both an ancient and modern holiday. Originally a post-biblical day of joy, it served as a matchmaking day for unmarried women in the Second Temple period (before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.). Tu B'Av was almost unnoticed in the Jewish calendar for many centuries but it has been rejuvenated in recent decades, especially in the modern state of Israel. In its modern incarnation it is gradually becoming a Hebrew-Jewish Day of Love, slightly resembling Valentine's Day in English-speaking countries.

There is no way to know exactly how early Tu B'Av began. The first mention of this date is in the Mishnah (compiled and edited in the end of the second century. The Gemara (the later, interpretive layer of the Talmud) attempts to find the origin of this date as a special joyous day and offers several explanations. One of them is that on this day the Biblical “tribes of Israel were permitted to mingle with each other,” namely: to marry women from other tribes.

It should be noted that Tu B'Av begins on the night between the 14th and 15th day of the Hebrew month, since this is the night of a full moon in our lunar calendar. Linking the night of a full moon with romance, love, and fertility is not uncommon in ancient cultures.

In recent decades Israeli civil culture promotes festivals of singing and dancing on the night of Tu B'Av. The entertainment and beauty industries work overtime on this date. It has no formal legal status as a holiday - it is a regular workday - nor has the Israeli rabbinate initiated any addition to the liturgy or called for the introduction of any ancient religious practices. The cultural gap between Israeli secular society and the Orthodox rabbinate makes it unlikely that these two will find a common denominator in the celebration of this ancient/modern holiday in the foreseeable future.

Image by [congerdesign](#) from [Pixabay](#)



Spiritual Life – Moments of Welcoming – Erev Shabbat Services

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.

What a beautiful way to welcome Shabbat. Old friends, new friends and even some friends who we've been missing.

To be surrounded by the people I care about, in our Home, and to hear the Sanctuary filled with voices singing and praying...warms my heart like little else. Shabbat helps me connect to my prayers and eases me out of the hectic week. Truly a wonderful evening.

On June 14 the Chazzanut group joined together to bring their voices, and more importantly, their love to our Temple is a Blessing. The beauty of the melodies, the wonderful harmonies and voices raised in prayer helps define what makes our Community so special.

The other thing that made it so wonderful is amount of time we spent schmoozing after Services are finished. When we spend more time talking and visiting after the Services, than the Services last, it's a great night. It truly makes our Community exceptional.

Special thanks to Drew for leading us in an evening of Prayer, thoughtful conversations, and warmth on June 21. Pretty sure the Aleynu prayer hasn't been discussed in that much depth at BCC in a loooong time, if ever. Also the D'var left us all thinking about the future and our roles. Truly a wonderful night.

Huge kudos to Judith for providing us with a number of different modes to spend our time in prayer together on June 28. The chanting was wonderful, the stories were inspirational, and (just a little) tear jerking. Our time together allowed me to reflect on things in the past...and one of the stories reminded me of how soft my grandmother's skin felt. What a wonderful time with friends.

Rabbi Phil will join us on July 12 with dinner and Oneg sponsored by Sisterhood.

If you have any ideas that will make our Shabbat Services more meaningful, on any level, please send me your thoughts. We love to participate in these community events that bring peace and joy to our hearts.

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Modeh Ani – “I Am Grateful”

“Appreciation is a wonderful thing: It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well.” - Voltaire

In this section of The Star we call attention to people in our community who have gone above and beyond to help us thrive. Say *Toda Raba* to someone using the link below!

Everyone who shared a story or memory at the June 8 Havdalah and Celebration for Rabbi Dan

Express your Gratitude!

We would like to recognize Beth Chaim members who have “stepped up”, or “given back” to our Beth Chaim community. As this is a community recognition, we would like the community to recommend members that are deserving of this honor.

Please take a moment to let us know who we should recognize. It’s easy. Just use the link below to nominate someone you think deserves to be noticed for their contribution to our community.

I AM GRATEFUL FOR [LINK](#)

Havdalah Celebration with Rabbi Dan



Saturday June 8 we enjoyed a brief fireside Havdalah service and shared stories about our special memories with Rabbi Dan Goldblatt. Thanks to the following people who created this wonderful time together:

- ❖ Tanya and Donald James – planning and organizing
- ❖ Judith Markowitz and Glen Schabacker – planning and organizing
- ❖ Evan Levy – food arrangements (catered by Sunrise)
- ❖ Debbie Roof, Leslie Diamond and Fran Birnbaum – challah bakers
- ❖ Larry Candeub – organizing and implementation
- ❖ Jeff Reitzes for the great sound system setup
- ❖ Rana Rines and her husband Spencer, along with the Beth Chaim Chazzanut: Judith Markowitz, Marc Mazer, Nancy Orgel, Drew Porter, and Jeff Reitzes
- ❖ Burt Feldstein, Paul Yamson, and other Brotherhood members for the wine and beverage bar

Link to more photos [HERE](#)

Sisterhood

by Lois Kamoroff and Suzie Homer, Sisterhood Co-Presidents



Welcome Summer!

Sisterhood will continue our regular monthly Rosh Chodesh gatherings, Book Club meetings, and our Walking Group. Check the calendar in this issue of The Star or on our website for the dates.

On Sunday, May 19, Sisterhood served breakfast to 125 adults and children for the Beit Midrash "End of the Year" celebration. Bagels, donuts, fruit, coffee and Juice were provided. It was wonderful to see so many young families!

Everyone please join for a very special Erev Shabbat on Friday July 12!

Sisterhood will be sponsoring Rabbi Phil Cohen for his first Shabbat service at Beth Chaim. We will welcome him to Beth Chaim with an Israeli Dinner before the service and desserts after.

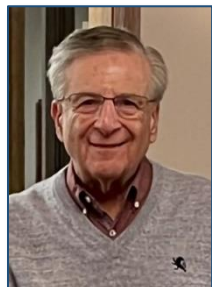
Brotherhood

by Burt Feldstein



Beth Chaim
Brotherhood

What We Do Together Matters

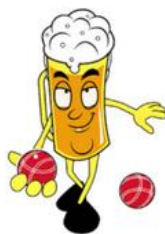


**Don't miss the ever-popular Beth Chaim
Dessert and Bocce Ball Night!**

Saturday, July 13, 2024

7:00 – 10:00 pm

Sycamore Valley Park
Bocce Courts – across
Holbrook from Beth
Chaim



BYOB (no hard liquor). Bocce is an Italian game, so wine always helps. Brotherhood will provide dessert and bottled water. No glass drinking vessels, please. Cups will be provided

Meet at the bocce ball courts (not at Beth Chaim) around 7 pm.

Questions? Contact Barry Denenberg
barrydenenberg@comcast.net

Membership

"There can be no joy without food and drink." - Talmud, Mo'ed Katan

Getting to Know our Newest Member Family – Anna, Hector and Gracie Salazar

by Debbie Roof, Director, Membership



This month Beth Chaim is going through an important, and exciting transition. We will greatly miss Rabbi Dan, after 30 years of having him lead our congregation. He helped us create a vibrant Jewish community in the Danville, San

Ramon, Alamo/Tri Valley area. In 2023, our decision to be part of the Union for Reform Judaism helped us with the process of finding a new Rabbi. It was highly recommended that we start the process with finding a transition Rabbi – we are very pleased to welcome Rabbi Phil Cohen and his wife Betsy Gamberg to our Beth Chaim community!

Rabbi Phil's first Shabbat service will be on Friday, July 12, preceded by an Israeli dinner provided by our Sisterhood and followed by the Oneg with desserts. Invite your Jewish friends, relatives, and neighbors so they can see firsthand what all the excitement is about at Beth Chaim!

You can also invite nonmember friends to our fun Bocce Ball night on July 13, sponsored by our Brotherhood, and any of the Sisterhood events, such as our monthly luncheons, walks, book group, and Rosh Chodesh gatherings. Many of our new members have started by being invited to attend a Beth Chaim event by someone they know. In addition, our new website is so nice that we also get new members who find our website!



This issue features our newest member family – the Salazars. Here is some interesting information about these new members – Anna, Hector and Gracie, and how they found Beth Chaim:

Beth Chaim: Tell us about your family:

Anna: It's me, my husband Hector, our daughter Gracie, and our dog Violet. Gracie is going into second grade at Golden View Elementary School in San Ramon.

Beth Chaim: Where did you and Hector grow up?

Anna: My family emigrated to the United States from Belarus when I was nine years old. I attended the Hebrew Academy of San Francisco for fifth through eighth grade. We moved to Castro Valley, where I went to Castro Valley High School. My Dad, Stepmom and sister live in Castro Valley. My Mom has passed away, and on her side we have an uncle who lives in Israel. I did my nursing school prerequisites at Chabot Junior College in Hayward. Then I went to Unitek College in Fremont, a Licensed Vocational Nursing School. After working for ten years as a Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN), I returned to Unitek College in 2016 to get my RN degree and license in 2018.

Hector grew up in San Jose. He mostly went to school in Sunnyvale and San Jose. We met through a friend, and ended up moving to San Ramon for the schools, for Gracie. We don't plan on moving again any time soon!

Beth Chaim: Tell us about your careers:

Anna: Since I got my RN license I have been doing night shifts at UCSF Medical Center in San Francisco. I mostly do adult nursing, on a stepdown ICU floor, which is after a patient is healthy enough to leave the ICU floor. Hector is self-employed and works with his mother in her housecleaning business.

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

Anna: Gracie plays soccer. During soccer season we basically live on the soccer field on the weekends. We like to travel locally because always take our dog Violet with us. Our favorite places to travel to are Monterey, Carmel, Paso Robles, Bodega Bay, San Luis Obispo and LA.

...continued next page

Beth Chaim: How did you choose Beth Chaim?

Anna: Since we are an Interfaith family, I googled Interfaith Synagogues, and Beth Chaim came up. We live in San Ramon, so Beth Chaim is very close. At Easter, we went to church for Easter Sunday. Gracie had all sorts of questions about Passover and Judaism, but I had not been connected to a synagogue since middle school. I didn't want to confuse her, so I ordered some books from Amazon about Passover. Then I sent an email inquiry to find out more about Beth Chaim. We set up a Preview Day for Gracie in Lara Groch's first grade Sunday School class. Gracie enjoyed it so much that she continued in the class until the last day of Sunday School in May! Hector and I both came to the parent breakfast and presentation on the last day of Sunday School.

Beth Chaim: What are you looking forward to at Beth Chaim?

Anna: I haven't been part of a synagogue in a very long time. We are all new to this. We joined for the religious school, and for Gracie to be aware and knowledgeable about her Judaism. Hector and I are open to attending and learning more, too, if it works with our schedules. Since I work night shifts full time, scheduling is often difficult for me. We have attended a couple of the PJ Library coffees at Tal's for young families. I also attended a mom's night out organized by Lara Groch. Part of the plan is for Gracie to continue with her religious school education and eventually have a Bat Mitzvah!

Chavurot at Beth Chaim Congregation

We have five active Chavurah groups, involving about 100 members! They are a fun way to make close friends among the membership at Beth Chaim and attend temple events together.

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.

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. **Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on "MEMBERS ONLY"**
3. Click on "Member access only" button. You will have View Only access to the Membership Directory and other information for members. The Directory is updated regularly.
4. Any member with a gmail-associated account will have access to materials on the Members Only Google folder. If you do not have a gmail-associated account please contact the office.

Children's Birthdays

| Name | Birthday | Age | Name | Birthday | Age |
|----------------------|----------|-----|-------------------|-----------|-----|
| Logan van der Bokke | July 1 | 6 | Dylan Wikstrom | August 4 | 10 |
| Ethan Goldman | July 3 | 11 | Jack Heller | August 4 | 11 |
| Chase Hall-Pinner | July 6 | 14 | Arielle Benaroya | August 7 | 14 |
| Nate Costa | July 8 | 14 | Benjamin Wikstrom | August 8 | 12 |
| Max Eisenberg | July 13 | 12 | Hannah Binder | August 8 | 17 |
| Maddox Fisher | July 13 | 14 | Noah Shapiro | August 9 | 10 |
| Madeleine Becker | July 15 | 16 | Declan Goldman | August 19 | 8 |
| Cody Costa | July 20 | 3 | Naomi Jain | August 21 | 11 |
| Levi Wall | July 20 | 5 | Gabriel Kolis | August 25 | 16 |
| Nathan Benaroya | July 22 | 8 | Orion Rhodes | August 28 | 9 |
| Zoe Karatov | July 25 | 11 | Milo Gillette | August 29 | 12 |
| Gabriella Battermann | July 26 | 13 | | | |

Wedding Anniversaries

| Names | Date | Years | Names | Date | Years |
|-----------------------------|---------|-------|----------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Matt & Marissa Gillette | July 1 | 17 | Jerry & Laura Raney | August 5 | 34 |
| Michael & Sarah Karatov | July 1 | 23 | Stacey & Seth Blackman | August 6 | 19 |
| Mitchell & Jeannene Hertz | July 2 | 29 | Bradley & Judith Colton | August 8 | 48 |
| Grace & Carlos Munoz | July 3 | 30 | Ray & Susan Cherry | August 8 | 53 |
| Josh & Tiffani Doughtie | July 4 | 10 | Harry & Sheryl Bonn | August 10 | 55 |
| Rae & Jonathan Corr | July 4 | 31 | Yoel & Julie Cohen | August 10 | 21 |
| Randall & Lisa Gross | July 4 | 30 | Daniel & Julie Kozak | August 11 | 23 |
| Gregory & Kristen Heiden | July 8 | 18 | Melissa & David Mann | August 11 | 17 |
| Sara Goldstein | July 8 | 34 | Jeff & Heidi Becker | August 13 | 41 |
| Gene & Sarah Simpson | July 10 | 14 | Adam & Kelly Holden | August 13 | 29 |
| Larry & Barbra Candeub | July 11 | 32 | Yael & Yaniv Benaroya | August 14 | 16 |
| Sanford & Joy Severin | July 13 | 67 | Dave & Kimberly Kamalman | August 15 | 26 |
| Michael & Marlene Stelowitz | July 16 | 57 | Bobbi & Marty Bach | August 19 | 62 |
| Tony & Michelle Erlick | July 16 | 35 | Hayuta & Maheesh Jain | August 23 | 27 |
| Craig & Debbie Hertz | July 18 | 32 | Joe & Michelle Gabriel | August 27 | 63 |
| Glenn & Julie Sulzberg | July 26 | 27 | Craig & Melissa Rosenblatt | August 27 | 18 |
| Scott & Courtney Finder | July 28 | 23 | | | |
| David & Melinda Bandler | July 29 | 35 | | | |

Membership Anniversaries

| Names | Years | Names | Years |
|--------------------------------|-------|------------------------------------|-------|
| Alan & Kathleen Vengel | 30 | Bonnie & Keith Brors | 11 |
| Michael & Mindy Murphy | 28 | Dr. Harry & Judy Levin | 10 |
| John Goldstein | 27 | Debbie & Richard Roof | 9 |
| Jeff Reitzes | 26 | Tim & Keren Carter | 9 |
| Dave & Debbie Rosenberg | 24 | Scott & Courtney Finder | 9 |
| Brad & Rachel Goldblatt | 24 | Rabbi Pam Frydman | 9 |
| Susan Friedman | 24 | Karen & Phil Grenetz | 9 |
| Rob & Stacy Kadesh | 24 | Adam Rubinfeld | 9 |
| Marc Mazer & Susan Talon-Mazer | 24 | Samantha & Brian Hanlon | 8 |
| John & Delia Verber | 24 | Sara & Dan Welch | 7 |
| Savyon Plumb | 23 | Ashley & Adam Heller | 7 |
| Peter & Vickie Eiges | 23 | Leila Naslavsky & Kleber Sales | 7 |
| Janice Frankel | 23 | Damon Thornburg | 7 |
| Heidi Levine | 21 | Sandi Morris | 6 |
| Burt Feldstein & Lynne Gross | 19 | Lara Groch & Jeremy Wall | 6 |
| Ellen Severson | 18 | James Sorhagen & Jean Lee | 5 |
| Elliot & Lisa Bloom | 17 | Bradley & Judith Colton | 5 |
| Brian & Morna Gersho | 17 | Kofi & Kathryn Inkabi | 2 |
| Janice Frankel | 23 | Dana & Jonathan Wikstrom | 1 |
| Arie & Kelley Cohen | 14 | Deborah Brachman & Moe Al-Arrayed | 1 |
| Lauren Herbstman | 12 | Elliot Campbell & Lavanya Ramadoss | 1 |
| Audra & Frederick Saul | 12 | Phil Cohen & Betsy Gamberg | 1 |
| Sanford & Joy Severin | 11 | | |

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GIVING FUNDS | Building Fund | Community Fund | Religious School Fund |

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

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

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Bonnie Saltzberg | In honor of Ally Ferber graduating & receiving her master's degree |
| Rick Ferber | |
| Marci Piccus | |
| Barry & Laura Denenberg | In memory of Joel Barry Volsky |
| Lois Kamoroff | In memory of Joel Barry Volsky |
| Larry & Barbara Candeub | In Memory of Hellen Mann |
| Larry & Barbara Candeub | In Honor of Susan Volsky |
| Larry & Barbara Candeub | In Memory of Otto Jagoda |
| William Katz | In memory of Janice Katz's first year of passing anniversary |
| Brotherhood | BCC streaming costs on Clearstream |

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Gene & Sarah Simpson
Judith & Bradley Colton



Effortless and cost-free way to support our community!

Do you shop at Draeger's or Lunardi's? Here is a fundraising opportunity to keep Beth Chaim Congregation going strong! It's easy to help our Beit Midrash! Simply visit escrip.com/wheretoeearn and get signed up with any of our participating merchants, including local stores Draeger's and Lunardi's.

Social Action | Tikkun Olam

If there is anxiety in a man's mind, let him quash and transform it into joy with encouragement." (Proverbs 12:25)

Reminder about The Hamsa Fund



In our last issue you may have read the article by Ronen Jain and Isabelle Sorhagen with Contra Costa Midrasha.

The Hamsa Fund is the Jewish Teen Philanthropy Board of the East Bay. In the Hamsa Fund, teens are encouraged to give back to their community while developing essential leadership skills that serve them well into adulthood. Over the course of the school year, teens in the Hamsa Fund learn about fundraising, group decision-making, and the role of philanthropy, or doing *mitzvahs*, in Judaism.

In light of the ongoing rise of Antisemitic attacks in the United States, the Hamsa Fund will focus additionally on fighting & advocating against Antisemitism by supporting the Bay Area Jewish Community Relations Council.

We are actively recruiting teens for next year's program. You can nominate others [here](#).

There may still be an opportunity to support this worthy effort by our local teens:

https://www.flipcause.com/secure/cause_pdetails/MjAwMTcz

Website Link: <https://www.ccmidrasha.com/hamsa-fund>

Nomination Link: <https://forms.gle/waWVE5vbJNCrEnk8>

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(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



Help Manage Our Waste – Tikkun Olam Starts at Home!



Here are a few housekeeping tips for the next time you are here for an event:

1. Use the right disposal bins. We will have new signs for extra guidance.

2. Minimize usage of disposable items. Think before you reach for that paper or plastic item.
3. Try to stack your used plates and cups BEFORE throwing them in the trash. Stacked items occupy less space and we will save on waste overage costs.

B'nei Mitzvah


Siman Tov u'Mazal Tov!

Wishing our B'nei Mitzvah success, happiness, friendship, health, and adventure. We're very proud of their accomplishments and we look forward to celebrating many simchas as they grow into adulthood.



Maya Benaroya – August 17

Maya is an incoming 8th grader at Stone Valley Middle School and is an outstanding student. She has an older sister, Arielle, and younger brother, Nathan. She is a competitive dancer and has been dancing since she was 2 years old. Her dedication and commitment to dance are truly inspiring. She enjoys spending time with family and friends, shopping, and going on vacations. It has been a joy to watch her prepare for her Bat Mitzvah, and we are incredibly proud of all of her achievements. We look forward to seeing her continue to grow into a remarkable young woman with such a bright future ahead!



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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

Torah Tots and Tot Shabbat Will Return in September!



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



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PJ Library

Torah Tots

Sundays
10:00am



Tot Shabbat

Fridays
5:30pm



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

Summer is always an interesting time for our Beit Midrash. While our sanctuary doesn't have 65+ children singing, talking and laughing, we are still as busy as ever working on new curriculum and dreaming up fun activities for next year.

During the quiet of the summer months, I want to give voice to a few individuals in our Beit Midrash community who do so much work in the background. Jeremy Wall has been such an essential part of our Beit Midrash events. He shows up to all of our Tot Shabbat Events to help set-up, and then stays to help with our Ruach dinners and ice cream dessert bars. Of course, he is married to our first-grade teacher and Tot-program coordinator, but he goes above and beyond to help anyone who needs it even though it is *never* his "job". He has come to our rescue countless times, making last-minute-errand trips, moving tables, setting up shade structures and so many other tasks. We are so grateful to you, Jeremy!!

Other unsung heroes are Rachel and Jonathan Cohen, both of whom have enriched our Beit Midrash with their passions. Rachel has worked with the JCFS Holocaust Center to bring a Holocaust survivor to our community for multiple years. There are so many logistics to making this happen and Rachel handles them all seamlessly.

Hearing survivors' stories has made such an impact on our students and community, and we will make this an annual tradition! Jonathan Cohen has graciously shared his passion for Hebrew with our students. While he was not able to teach Hebrew this year, he stepped in to substitute for Hebrew teachers many times and tutored some students regularly. He also served as a substitute for Sunday School and has been unwaveringly kind, flexible and enthusiastic. I am thrilled to welcome him to our official Sunday School Teaching staff next year! A big thank you to the Cohen family for bringing your commitment and enthusiasm to our community.

In July, we will welcome Rabbi Phil and I look forward to partnering with him to bring new energy into our Beit Midrash.

I hope you all have a meaningful summer and I look forward to what this next year has in store.

Kol Tuv,

Morah Shelby Meyer Margolin (she/her/hers)

Principal, Beth Chaim Beit Midrash
educator@bethchaim.com



Questions? Contact Morah Shelby at
educator@bethchaim.com

Good news! The Contra Costa County Jewish Community Center (CCJCC) has awarded Beth Chaim Beit Midrash a 2024 Community Impact Grant of \$6500 for adding Wilderness Torah to our 6th grade curriculum next year! We are very excited to work with the wonderful people at Wilderness Torah on this meaningful addition to our curriculum. The official "kickoff" will be at our Summer Sing Out on Friday, August 23rd.





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

Contra Costa Midrasha's 2024 Summer/Fall Update

We are SO excited to start 2024-25 at Contra Costa Midrasha. Before we dive into our new year, I want to share some of the biggest accomplishments of this past year, 2023-24.

- Our overall student enrollment was up by 20% with a class of 23 teens graduating this May.
- CCM's retreats program now called "Bay Yachad" included over 9 teen-serving organizations from all over the Bay Area with 116 teens attending at least one retreat. (Though 60% attended two or more.)
- The Hamsa Fund teens raised \$4000 which they donated to the Jewish Community Relations Council, Youth Homes and CASA.
- Impact Builder dedicated their whole year to working with Tiny Village Spirit and hope to help them move into their facility early next year.
- Better Together's intergenerational programming bonded 19 elders and 25 teens, ending their year with a pickle making party!

Numbers don't tell the whole story. Here are my favorite quotes from some of our graduating teens telling why Midrasha was so meaningful and memorable for them:

- "Midrasha is not just a weekly event for me: it's my home, my haven, where I truly feel alive and a place where I've formed deep connections with amazing friends." - Noah
- "During my time at Midrasha, I discovered a vibrant Jewish community for teens just like me. Every Wednesday night, I looked forward to a place where I knew I would be accepted and loved for who I am. I learned what it means to be included, uplifted and unconditionally supported by a whole community. Midrasha also solidified my connection to Judaism. May we continue to learn and grow together, carrying the light of Midrasha wherever we go." - Avria



Devra Aarons,
CCM Director

- "Every single retreat I went on it felt like my soul was getting glued back together - back to its fullest potential because each retreat was filled with so much love and enjoyment that it truly was a healing experience." - Allison
- "Having a place like Midrasha is so incredibly special - getting to connect with other teens that understand what it's like to be Jewish. Midrasha has helped me to embrace my Judaism and I am so grateful for that." - Liza
- "It's the moments during the retreats that I find most memorable: staying up all night in the cabin, going on hikes and experiencing nature, participating in the talent shows or singing Birkat after every meal, it's those moments that define my experience with Judaism thus far." - Elliot, Class of 2024

Graduation on May 22nd. Congratulations to this year's graduating class, with 23 teens! Special shout out to **Beth Chaim teens, Averie Bleier, Kyla Cohen, Liza Corr, Riley Sacks.**





We hope 2024-25 will be just as impactful with our continued Wednesday nights, Bay Yachad retreats and bevy of Sunday Tikkun Olam (repair the world) programming. Registration for 2024-25 is now open. We also invite you to nominate a teen for Hamsa Fund and sign up for Better Together. Here are all the links:

- CCM's 2024-25 Registration @ https://www.flipcause.com/secure/cause_pdetails/MjA3MDgz
- Hamsa Fund Application for 2024-25 @ <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfOHpVUCahZQos5GTp8u5hRGNVMfVPGI3K9XxX0hUFiYDf7Sg/viewform>
- Better Together Registration for 2024-25 @ https://www.flipcause.com/secure/cause_pdetails/MjA2Mjl3

Finally save the date for February 22, 2025 - CCM's Annual Gala happening at the San Ramon Marriott where CCM will honor our Executive Director, Devra Aarons for her 18 years of service, creating impactful Jewish teen community and connection.

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](#) or check out our website at ccmidrasha.com. There's something for every teen and enrollment is always open!

Yahrzeits

Zichronam L'vracha – May Their Memories be a Blessing

| Name | Date | Relationship |
|--------------------|--------|--------------------------------|
| Jean Levin | Jul 2 | Mother of Sheila Kaplan |
| Thomas E. Day Jr. | Jul 3 | Son of Mary and Tom Day |
| Jack Zuckerberg | Jul 7 | Father of Janice Frankel |
| Donna Perry Orr | Jul 8 | Mother of Aaron Stagg |
| Muriel Jencks | Jul 9 | Mother of Tanya James |
| Donald Morris | Jul 9 | Husband of Sandi Morris |
| Charlotte Hyman | Jul 13 | Mother of Lynn Katz |
| Robert Mueller | Jul 13 | Father of Jeffrey Mueller |
| Frances Klein | Jul 15 | Mother of Art Klein |
| Rose Lederman | Jul 15 | Mother of Herb Lederman |
| Susan Kolis | Jul 17 | Mother of Michael Kolis |
| Marilyn Taylor | Jul 17 | Mother of Kelly Holden |
| Jeannette Kandel | Jul 17 | Mother of Sandi Morris |
| David Cohen | Jul 21 | Father of Sheryl Bonn |
| Galina Blyakherava | Jul 25 | Mother of Anna Salazar |
| Mary Harley | Jul 26 | Mother of Trish Slomowitz |
| Rhoda Seltzer | Jul 26 | Mother of David Seltzer |
| Steven Corr | Jul 26 | Father of Jonathan Corr |
| Morris Pearlman | Jul 26 | Father of Bonnie Brors |
| William Levine | Jul 27 | Brother of Heidi Levine |
| Michael Prince | Jul 31 | Father of Stephanie Abramowitz |



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Yahrzeits, cont'd

Zichronam L'vracha – May Their Memories be a Blessing

| Name | Name | Name |
|---------------------|--------|------------------------------|
| Marcia Amada | Aug 2 | Mother of Naomi Ehrlich |
| Anita Dodge | Aug 3 | Mother of Lisa Goldberg |
| Jack Portnoy | Aug 4 | Father of Joy Severin |
| Estelle Yamshon | Aug 7 | Mother of Paul Yamshon |
| Tecca Blankfeld | Aug 8 | Mother of Deborah Blankfeld |
| Barton Heller | Aug 10 | Father of Scott Heller |
| Raney Stanford | Aug 10 | Father of Morna Gersho |
| Sharon Dronzek | Aug 10 | Sister of Harry Bonn |
| Pearl Siegal | Aug 11 | Mother of Bobbi Bernstein |
| Milton Levin | Aug 16 | Step-father of Sheila Kaplan |
| Ilene Hoffman | Aug 17 | Sister of Michelle Gabrielle |
| Craig Perlmuth | Aug 17 | Brother of Vickie Eiges |
| Minnie Pearlman | Aug 17 | Mother of Bonnie Brors |
| Ruth Kasper | Aug 22 | Mother of Denise Zavaleta |
| Gerry Creighton | Aug 22 | Mother of Robyn Mizes |
| John Abraham Sandor | Aug 23 | Father of Janet Freiman |
| Muriel James | Aug 26 | Mother of Donald James |
| John Mulrooney | Aug 27 | Father of Lisa Gross |
| Jack Katz | Aug 28 | Brother of William Katz |
| Ralph Sacks | Aug 29 | Father of Andy Sacks |
| Judy Robbins | Aug 30 | Sister of Martin Goldberg |
| Sally Goldberg | Aug 30 | Mother of Martin Goldberg |
| Harold Davidson | Aug 31 | Father of Darrell Davidson |



Marketplace

Classified ads are free for Beth Chaim members. There is a nominal annual charge of \$30 for a seven-line insertion for non-members. If you would like to place an ad, call the Beth Chaim office at 925-736-7146, or send an email to admin@bethchaim.com.

The inclusion of any advertisement in this publication — including classifieds — or reference to any product, process, service, trade name, trademark, or manufacturer, is not an endorsement by Beth Chaim Congregation of any such advertisers, entities, persons, products, services, names or marks.

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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 mbandler@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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