



BETH
CHAIM
CONGREGATION

Celebrating
Spiritual
Community
Since 1978

THE STAR

VOLUME 47 | ISSUE 1 | JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2025 | TEVET/SHEVAT 5785



In This Issue

Editor’s Note.....	3
COMING SOON! Events not to miss in January and February.....	4
Ongoing Weekly Activities	5
Special Events and Workshops	5
Rabbi Phil’s Thoughts.....	6
Israel – Resources for Education and Action	7
Introducing our Beth Chaim Congregation 2025 Board of Directors	8
Spiritual Life	13
Shabbat Services at Beth Chaim - Perspectives.....	14
Tu B’Shevat.....	15
Modeh Ani – “I Am Grateful”.....	16
Hanukkah at Beth Chaim was filled with lights and fun	17
Sisterhood	18
Brotherhood.....	19
Membership.....	20
<i>Chavurot at Beth Chaim Congregation</i>	21
Generosity	23
Social Action Tikkun Olam	24
<i>Help Manage Our Waste – Tikkun Olam Starts at Home!</i>	25
Education	26
B’nei Mitzvah.....	28
Yahrzeits.....	29
Marketplace	31
Beth Chaim Board of Directors, 2025	32

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:



STAFF

ADMINISTRATIVE MAIN NUMBER: 925-736-7146

Rabbi | Rabbi Phil Cohen | ravbccca@yahoo.com
716 481 7929

Principal of Religious School | Shelby Margolin |
educator@bethchaim.com

Religious School Admin | Alex Lofrese |
schooladmin@bethchaim.com

Accountant | Chloe Zheng |
hours M-F 8 am – 12 pm
bookkeeper@bethchaim.com

Administrative Assistant | Melanie Hirsch |
hours M-F 11 am – 3 pm
admin@bethchaim.com

EDITORIAL

Director of Marketing & Communications | Ellen
Waltrip | ellen@divmg.com

Editor-in-Chief | Deborah Wechsler |
debwex52@yahoo.com

Copy Editor | Rae Corr |
mailto:raecorr@sbcglobal.net

Advertising | Chloe Zheng |
bookkeeper@bethchaim.com

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.

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)
President's Letter
Articles by Rabbi Cohen
Spiritual Life / Jewish Holidays / Lifelong Learning
Articles about recent activities pref. with photos
Membership

Gratitude Notes and Donations
PreK: PJ Library / Torah Tots / Tree of Life
Beit Midrash, Bnei Mitzvah, Contra Costa Midrasha
Yahrzeits
Wedding & Member Anniversaries; Kids' Birthdays
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**

March 1 for Mar/Apr issue **due Feb 20**

May 1 for May/June issue **due Apr 20**

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

July 1 for July/August issue **due June 20**

Sept 1 for Sept/Oct issue **due Aug 20**

Nov 1 for Nov/Dec issue **due Oct 20**

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

COMING SOON! Events not to miss in January and February

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
JAN 1	New Years Day – Office Closed	Wednesday		
JAN 1	Hanukkah 8 th night			
JAN 2	Sisterhood Monthly Walking Group	Thursday	9:30 AM	Lunardi's Parking Lot
JAN 3	Sharing Shabbat Together	Friday	6:00 PM	BCC
JAN 6	Genealogy Club	Monday	7:00 PM	BCC
JAN 7	Sisterhood Rosh Chodesh Gathering	Tuesday	7:00 PM	BCC
JAN 8	Virtual Learning with Rabbi Cohen	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Via Zoom
JAN 10	Sharing Shabbat Together	Friday	6:00 PM	BCC
JAN 15	Virtual Learning with Rabbi Cohen	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Via Zoom
JAN 16	Brotherhood Book Group	Thursday	7:30 PM	Via Zoom
JAN 17	Sharing Shabbat Together	Friday	6:00 PM	BCC
JAN 20	Martin Luther King Day – Office Closed	Monday		
JAN 21	Sisterhood Book Club	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Home of Sandi Morris
JAN 22	Virtual Learning with Rabbi Cohen	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Via Zoom
JAN 24	Sharing Shabbat Together	Friday	6:00 PM	BCC
JAN 29	Virtual Learning with Rabbi Cohen	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Via Zoom
JAN 31	Sharing Shabbat Together & Ruach Svc	Friday	6:00 PM	BCC
JAN 31	Brotherhood Winter Getaway through Feb 2	Friday - Monday		Cohen Family Compound Placerville
FEB 3	Genealogy Club	Monday	7:00 PM	BCC
FEB 5	Sisterhood Rosh Chodesh Gathering	Tuesday	7:00 PM	TBD
FEB 5	Virtual Learning with Rabbi Cohen	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Via Zoom
FEB 6	Sisterhood Monthly Walking Group	Thursday	9:30 AM	Lunardi's Parking Lot
FEB 7	Sharing Shabbat Together	Friday	6:00 PM	BCC
FEB 8	Sisterhood Celebration – Women and Nature	Saturday	All day	BCC
FEB 12	Virtual Learning with Rabbi Cohen	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Via Zoom
FEB 13	Tu B'Shevat	Thursday		
FEB 14	Sharing Shabbat Together	Friday	6:00 PM	BCC
FEB 14	Zoe Karatov Bat Mitzvah	Saturday	10:00 AM	BCC
FEB 18	Sisterhood Book Club	Tuesday	7:00 PM	TBD
FEB 21	Sharing Shabbat Together	Friday	6:00 PM	BCC
FEB 28	Sharing Shabbat Together	Friday	6:00 PM	BCC

Ongoing Weekly Activities

Religious School	Sundays	9:15 AM	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.



Special Events and Workshops

UPCOMING ADULT ED TAUGHT BY RABBI COHEN

All classes Zoom only,
Wednesdays at 7:00
starting January 8

Rabbi Cohen's Adult Learning - [Recurring Zoom Meeting Link](#)



WOMEN OF THE HEBREW BIBLE (cont'd)

January 8, 15, 22

In this class we will look at the main biblical women found in the Hebrew Bible, Eve, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Miriam, Deborah, Esther and more. We'll also study some midrashim on these women characters, as well as looking at some modern midrashim from a wonderful book called Dirshuni.

REVISING THE COVENANT

January 29, February 5, 12

The Jewish tradition teaches that a covenant exists between God and the Jewish people. However, the nature of that covenant is always evolving. In this class we'll discuss the idea of covenant as presented in the thought of three different contemporary Jewish thinkers, Eugene Borowitz, David Hartman, and Irving (Yitz) Greenberg. Students will be able to listen to a Zoom conversation between Rabbi Cohen and Rabbi Greenberg on the subject of his new book, *The Triumph of Life*.

ENJOY YOUR WEEKEND WITH YOUR BROTHERS
BCC BROTHERHOOD RETREAT
FRIDAY JAN 31ST TO SUNDAY FEB 2ND
6200 SLY PARK RD IN PLACERVILLE
COME JOIN US FOR A WEEKEND OF ADVENTURE
2 NIGHTS STAY WITH FOOD & DRINK FOR ONLY \$100!

WE HAVE!

FISHING
ARCHERY
SHOOTING
HIKING
CANOEING
BILLIARDS
POKER & DICE
ARCADE GAMES
SKIING
LOCAL SHOPPING
CASINO NEARBY
GREAT FOOD
ALCOHOL
SHABBAT
& SHMOOZING!
JOIN US AS WE
BUILD NEW
MEMORIES
TOGETHER!
CALL BURT AT
(510)909-6541



**SIGN UP NOW!
SPOTS ARE LIMITED
AND FILLING UP!**

Rabbi Phil's Thoughts

By Rabbi Phil Cohen

Both January and February, the two months that occupy this issue of The Star, contain elements relevant to the African American community. In January we celebrate Martin Luther King's legacy, this year on January 20th. All of February has been



designated African American History month, an opportunity to learn about the African American contribution to this country. (As a quick aside, May has been designated as Jewish American Heritage Month - JAHM.) Interfaith-San Ramon Valley is organizing a day of service in honor of MLK Day. Stay tuned for more information as it becomes available.

I thought I'd use this confluence as an opportunity to introduce you to one of my rabbinic heroes, Rabbi Joachim Prinz. Rabbi Prinz (1902-1988) was born in Germany. Ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau, he served as a rabbi in Berlin. As Hitler rose to power, he became a powerful vocal critic of the Nazi regime, so much so that he was threatened with incarceration if he did not leave the country. He did leave and came to the US where he served Temple B'nai Abraham in Newark, NJ. He also became a national figure, touring the country on behalf of Israel, and served as president of the American Jewish Congress (AJC) from 1958-1966. He traveled the country in support of civil rights, joining picket lines in protest of racial prejudice and all the inequality racism generates.

The AJC was a co-sponsor of the famous March on Washington on August 28, 1963. Rabbi Prinz was invited to speak, which he did, right after the singer Odetta, and right before Dr. King, who delivered his masterful I Have a Dream speech.

Rabbi Prinz's speech is excellent, though quite justifiably eclipsed by MLK's remarks. Prinz's words emerge from his experience with fascism in Germany and racism in America.

Here are some of Rabbi Prinz's remarks given on that historic day in August 1963:

"In the realm of the spirit, our fathers taught us thousands of years ago that when God created man, he created him as everybody's neighbor. Neighbor is not a geographic term. It is a moral concept. It means our collective responsibility for the preservation of man's dignity and integrity.

From our Jewish historic experience of three and a half thousand years we say:

Our ancient history began with slavery and the yearning for freedom. During the Middle Ages my people lived for a thousand years in the ghettos of Europe. Our modern history begins with a proclamation of emancipation.

It is for these reasons that it is not merely sympathy and compassion for the black people of America that motivates us. It is above all and beyond all such sympathies and emotions, a sense of complete identification and solidarity born of our own painful historic experience... the most important thing that I learned under those tragic circumstances (his experience under Naziism) was that bigotry and hatred are not the most urgent problem. The most urgent, the most disgraceful, the most shameful and the most tragic problem is silence."

Surely the problem of "silence" remains with us today. We live in a world besieged with issues that demand our attention. In such a climate the impulse to silence should be shunned. We need to constantly voice our opposition to acts of oppression, prejudice, and antisemitism. We must lift our voices and shout to heaven our passion for justice in a world where justice is frequently absent.

People like Dr. King and Rabbi Prinz offer us models for thought and action, a path to navigate our way through a world desperately in need of our help.

Shalom u'v'racha

Phil

Rabbi Phil Cohen Ph.D.

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](#)

Creative Home Mortgages For You



Over 30 years experience
Call today for a customized loan evaluation.
I'll provide the right loan options and give you the information you need.

Ellen Graff Waltrip Loan Officer
Cell: (925) 202-3655
ellen@divmg.com
NMLS # 254335



© 2024 Diversified Mortgage Group, All Rights Reserved. Licensed by The Department Of Financial Protection and Innovation (DFPI) under the California Residential Mortgage Lending Act #4150025. Branch NMLS #508121 Offers of Credit subject to Credit Approval. To verify our state license, please log onto the following website: www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org. 5199 Johnson Drive, Suite 110 Pleasanton, CA 94588

A division of CMG Mortgage Inc. NMLS #1820





SUSAN FRIEDMAN
Landscape Architecture, ASI A

DISTINCTIVE RESIDENTIAL &
COMMERCIAL LANDSCAPE DESIGN

susanfriedmanlandscape.com

The only investment guaranteed to grow! 925.806.0643

Introducing our Beth Chaim Congregation 2025 Board of Directors

Arie Cohen, President

I am honored to have the opportunity to continue for a second two-year term as your BCC President. I look forward to the challenge and continuing on the path that we have set in motion 2023-24.

We will continue to work together with our interim Rabbi Phil Cohen to identify our next incredible spiritual leader. We must work to alleviate our financial burdens. We need to grow, by building a community that embraces and supports our current members, works to bring back past members and expands aggressively with our next generation of members. To accomplish this we need our full congregation's energy and support. With your help, our board believes we are bringing a new era to Beth Chaim in which our members' active participation creates a spiritual community full of friendship and deep and meaningful connection. I look forward to continuing on this positive trajectory with all of you.

P.S. My other passions include my real estate career, collecting comic books, antique cars, bowling and most of all, spending time with Kelley, Kyla, Noah, Eli and our three pups.



Scott Ehrlich, Vice President

Scott and his wife Naomi have been members of Beth Chaim for over 19 years. A native of North Hollywood, Scott attended San Francisco State University where he met Naomi. Scott has served on the BCC Board as the membership director, brotherhood president, president and trustee. He looks forward to supporting AJ any way he can.



Marc Feder, Vice President

Marc is honored to continue on the board of directors working to help the Beth Chaim Community thrive. Marc is a full-nester with his wife, Anne, and teens Aviva and Talia. They have been members of Beth Chaim since shortly after their move from San Francisco to Danville in 2009. Marc is a mediator by profession and demeanor....at least outside the home. He loves to ski, collect and drink wine and spirits, and take lots and lots and lots of pictures.



Elliot Binder, Treasurer

Elliot Binder was born and raised in Canada. He lived in Vancouver, Toronto, Irvine, Santa Barbara, San Francisco before finally settling down in Danville. He is married to Cameron and they have three children Hannah (17), Ethan (14) and Emerson (9). Hannah & Ethan have both gone through the Beth Chaim Beit Midrash and had their B'Nei Mitzvah at Beth Chaim. Hannah has been a Madricha for the 7th grade class while Emerson is currently in third grade. Cameron currently serves on the Beit Midrash Education Committee. If you are looking for Elliot after work hours, you will find him watching soccer games, participating in carpools to Midrasha in Walnut Creek, I Can Do That Theatre, jogging the streets of Danville with their family dog, or sitting on the couch, binging one of many shows.

Elliot is currently a licensed CPA in the state of California and is a partner in a global accounting firm. In addition, his current role is the office leader of the San Jose tax practice. His experience includes serving on the Greenbrook Eagle Board Fund as Treasurer for 4 years and director for an additional 6 years. In this role as Treasurer he was responsible for managing the banking, approving and overseeing budgets, as well as reporting monthly on the financial state of the organization. He is excited about continuing to learn about Beth Chaim's financial position and working with a strong board to see the growth and success of the community.



David Swedlow, Secretary

David received his Aerospace Engineering degree at MIT, medical degree at Harvard, pediatric training at Johns Hopkins, and anesthesiology and critical care training at the University of Pennsylvania. He fully retired in late 2006 after having enjoyed four successful careers – first, an active tour of duty as Medical Staff Officer of the US Public Health Service at the National Institutes of Health; second, as a Director of Pediatric Intensive Care at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia; third, as the Senior VP of Medical Affairs and Technology at Nellcor Puritan Bennett here in California (a medical device company he joined while it was a startup and from which he retired after it was acquired for \$1.2 Billion); and finally as a freelance technology consultant and venture capital investor. Along the way, he has served on several boards of directors including: three non-profit foundations, two professional trade associations, three public and private high tech medical device companies, and two venture capital funds. His professional committee service has included United States and International Standards Committee Task Forces on Medical Devices, the Health Industry Manufacturer’s Association Steering Committee, the University of Pennsylvania Faculty Steering Committee, and the Chairmanship of an Advisory Panel for the US Food and Drug Administration. As a result of his 30+ years of experience in government, academia, and industry, David has honed his skills at creative problem solving, “out-of-the-box” thinking, and consensus building. His approach to problem solving is to seek “win-win” solutions that meet the needs of multiple stakeholders with conflicting interests.



Sasha Kantor, Director of Fundraising

Look for information about Sasha, our new Director of Fundraising, in the next issue of The Star.

Larry Candeub, Officer Religious Affairs (Spiritual Life Director)

Shalom! My name is Larry Candeub. My wonderful wife Barbra, amazing children, Jake, Jessie and Josh, and I have been members of Beth Chaim for about 15 years.

As your Director of Religious Affairs/Spiritual Life, for the past three years, I have enjoyed interacting with and meeting new friends. Many I had only seen occasionally or never met before. The more people I meet, the more I am amazed with the level of care and compassion our members possess.

I am excited about 5785. I am looking forward to continuing to help strengthen our connections within the Beth Chaim Community. I am aware that many people have many different needs. Each activity or event may not resonate with you or your family. I would encourage you to contact me and share any thoughts, ideas or provide feedback that will help us help you get more out of your Beth Chaim experience. We exist solely for our members.

I hope you agree with me that the Beth Chaim Community, our Home, is critical to the Jewish presence in the Tri Valley area. I would encourage you to take a small step out of your comfort zone and explore some, or all, of what we have to offer. A Shabbat Service, perhaps the Chanukah Party, or even swing by a Torah Tots or Tot Shabbat activity. Feel free to meet other people, or just sit back and take it all in. We are a wonderful community with much to offer. I look forward to meeting you and hearing your thoughts and ideas as to how we can create an even more amazing community. Please let me know how I can help! Shalom!



Keith Brors, Director of Building

My family and I have been active members of Beth Chaim for over a decade. Our daughter went through religious school from first grade all the way to her Bat Mitzvah. I served on the Education Committee for Beth Chaim for several years and I am an active member of Beth Chaim’s Brotherhood. In my spare time, I enjoy reading, games of all sorts, and doing activities with my family.

I am a software engineer lead at my current company and work with many people in different job disciplines daily. My duties range from dealing with issues requiring immediate attention to projects that take planning and several months to execute and finish. For the last two years I have been on the BCC board as director of Building. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to serve on our Board of Directors board and put my knowledge to use.

Please contact me by phone or email if you have any questions.



Jeff Reitzes, Director of Education

Jeff has been a member of Beth Chaim for over 25 years. He has two kids, Jordan and Samantha, who have grown up at Beth Chaim and are now in college. Jeff was a member of the first Beth Chaim Adult B’nei Mitzvah class at age 42, was a Chesed coordinator for several years, trope-mentored several 7th-graders, sings with the Beth Chaim Chazzanut Group, and currently teaches the 7th Grade Jew Crew at Sunday School.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Jeff moved to the Bay Area in 1992 and started a career in Telecom and call centers – successfully avoiding an occupation that had anything to do with the two BAs (Radio-TV-Film and History), Teaching Credential (Secondary Social Studies) and Master’s degree (History) he earned before fleeing Southern California. He happily resides as an empty-nester in Pleasant Hill with ‘Lucky’, his faithful corgi.



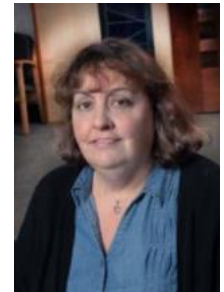
Debbie Roof, Director of Membership

Debbie has enjoyed being Membership Director at Beth Chaim for over 7 years. During that time, she signed up many new members at Beth Chaim who have become very active in Sisterhood, Brotherhood, religious school, and on the board. Debbie and her husband Rich have enjoyed living in Danville since 1984. Their children, Katie and Alan, both live in the LA area. Debbie received her master's degree in Psychoeducational Studies in 1980 at the University of Colorado in Boulder, where she met her husband Rich. She worked for 37 years as a school psychologist. Debbie was a project coordinator and grant writer in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District for an early intervention program and is currently writing grants for Beth Chaim. She enjoys attending many Sisterhood events, including the monthly luncheons, Rosh Chodesh. Book Group, and special events. Her favorite hobby is making challah, in all different shapes and flavors, and sharing it with others!



Naomi Ehrlich, Director of Social Action (Tikkun Olam)

Naomi and her husband Scott have been members of Beth Chaim for almost 21 years. A native of New Jersey, Naomi grew up in Marin County and graduated from San Francisco State University where she met Scott. They have 3 sons and a new daughter in law, Jordan and Gabrielle, Matthew, and Jacob and all 3 celebrated their bar mitzvahs at Beth Chaim. Naomi has been involved in social work her entire adult life with a passion for helping those who are less fortunate. As the Director of Tikkun Olam, she has especially enjoyed the BCC community's support for the many social action programs throughout the year and is looking forward to the winter season with the upcoming Adopt a Family and Winter Nights Shelter. She also serves on the Contra Costa Interfaith Council.



Tanya James, Director at Large

Tanya is delighted to continue on the BCC Board of Directors for a third year. Among her previous Board positions are Sisterhood Co-President, Director of the Education Committee, Director of Administration and Director of Fundraising. Tanya and her husband Donald joined the synagogue 27 years ago. They are grateful for all the friends they have made and the support Rabbi Dan and the community has given them. Both their kids, Brandon and Shawna, attended the BCC Beit Midrash, had their B'nei Mitzvahs and were Madrichim. Their kids are appreciative for having these Jewish learning opportunities and the connection to their Jewish community. Tanya retired in spring of 2023 after working for Fremont Bank for 21.5 years, being a stay-at-home mom for 9 years, and working for Nabisco Foods for 13 years. She is looking forward to joining Donald in his retirement. They have plans to travel, travel, travel. Tanya is also looking forward to giving back to many organizations, reading, relaxing, exercising, having time to socialize/meet new people and cooking healthy meals. The next chapter of their lives will be amazing.



Deborah Wechsler, Director at Large (Administration)

Deborah is originally from New Mexico. After receiving her MS in geophysics, she worked for the Los Alamos National Lab and then Chevron for 26 years in a variety of scientific and managerial positions. Members of Beth Chaim since 2001, she and her husband Bruce Bilodeau and their two daughters lived and worked in Indonesia from 2003-2007, returning to Danville and Beth Chaim two months after our new building was opened. Deborah has held various board and volunteer positions for Beth Chaim, including President, Treasurer, Religious Affairs Officer, editor of The Star Newsletter, and buildings, fundraising and recognition committees. She has also been the leader of the BCC Rosh Chodesh women's gathering for many years. Outside of Beth Chaim she volunteers with several local organizations. Deborah has a passion for removing barriers for others' talents to shine and believes that we can always improve our practices and policies for our wonderful clergy, educators and office staff.



Kim Thompson, Director at Large (Chesed)

Kim lives in San Ramon with her husband Michael and daughters, Jaiden, 21, and Kalea, 17. The Thompsons have been members of BCC for 15 years. Kim was raised in Scottsdale, Arizona and graduated with her BA from Vassar College in Child Psychology and Special Education and received her Master of Education from ASU. Kim has spent the past 27 years in the field of education with jobs ranging from a reading specialist to a special education teacher, to an elementary school principal. Kim has a passion for equity and activism and loves dance, yoga, hiking, shopping and most of all travel! This will be the 7th year Kim has served as Director of Chesed, a position she cherishes as an opportunity to help ensure BCC is a caring and warm community that values and supports all of its members.



Ellen Waltrip, Director at Large (Marketing and Communication)

Ellen is excited to continue on this board for another year, after previously serving 2 years as Secretary a bit over 10 years ago. Ellen also organized several Family Camp weekends when her kids were young. Ellen, Mat and their children Stephen and Rachel have been members of Beth Chaim since 2001. Both kids had the privilege of becoming a B'nai Mitzvah with Rabbi Dan. Ellen loves helping people with their home financing and enjoys travel, hiking, skiing at Palisades and spending time with friends and family. Beth Chaim's superpower is the special, nurturing community of people we have that celebrate joyous times and support each other during challenging ones. She looks forward to helping make a difference!



Jonathan Corr, Past President

Jonathan was President of Beth Chaim for 2021-2022, and he looks forward to continuing to support AJ Cohen and the entire board as Past President. Jonathan grew up outside Boston in a conservative Jewish family, and after attending Columbia University in NYC, he moved to the Bay Area in August 1989. He and his wife, Rae, will have been married for 32 years this coming July and have been members of Beth Chaim since 1998. They have 3 children, Rosie, Zackary, and Liza, who have all had B'nai Mitzvahs at Beth Chaim. Jonathan was previously on the BCC Board in 2007-2009 as VP, Finance. Jonathan retired as CEO from Ellie Mae in March 2021. In early 2022, following a long-time passion, Jonathan and Rae formed Omniscient Owl Productions LLC to produce commercial theatrical productions. They are currently co-producers of 6 shows in different stages of development. Jonathan is a public board director for Paycor (PYCR) and Independence Holdings (ACQRU). He is also an investor, board member and advisor to several private technology companies.



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.

As we draw to the end of the year, I'd like to reflect on 2024....what a year it was.

Our biggest event was the retirement of our beloved Rabbi Dan. Thirty years as the leader of our Congregation, mentor to our children, and friend to all. We were Blessed. Our farewell Havdalah and party were a memorable way to wish our friend a "till we meet again" sendoff, as he will certainly once again rejoin us.

In July, we welcomed Rabbi Phil Cohen, our interim Rabbi. Our first Shabbat with Rabbi Cohen was well attended and we showed up to welcome him into our Home. There were many new faces, to me, as well as people that I had never seen at a Shabbat Service. As the summer turned into fall, Rabbi Cohen got to know us and what makes us tick a little better. We found our rhythm as a Congregation and began spending more time together at Shabbat. His wife, Betsy Gamburg, has become our "bonus". Betsy has thrown herself into our Beth Chaim Community as well as the Danville Community. They are now and will forever be part of our Beth Chaim legacy.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the amazing Gala and all the hard work that Tanya James, and her unbelievable team, put together. Personally, I was humbled by the outpouring of love and generosity. The money raised to offset our mortgage was exceptional. Your generosity will help secure a brighter future for our children and beyond.

The High Holy Days saw some changes. With Rana Rines leading our Chazanut, we were Blessed with songs of prayer and joy. Rabbi Cohen shared many inspirational stories, and our Family and Tot Services were very well attended...despite the 100+ degree weather. For the first time in a decade, our Break the Fast returned to our Home. What a joy to have our community together.

Our Beit Midrash, under the direction of Shelby Meyer Margolin continues to grow and thrive. Please see her article for more details.

Finally, we wrapped up our secular year, with our Hanukkah celebration. We had families, old timers, newcomers, newborns and grandparents. It was a fun time for all.

If you have read this article this far, please send me an email. If you do, I will make a donation to the Beth Chaim Building Fund in your honor. Thank you for allowing me the honor of serving as your Director of Religious Affairs/Spiritual Life. I look forward to another amazing year.

Shabbat Services at Beth Chaim - Perspectives

This issue we have a contribution from our Membership Director Debbie Roof and three of our Oneg Committee members, Kathie Bleier, Lois Kamoroff and Susan Volsky.



If you have not come to a Friday night service in a while – check it out! The first Shabbos of each month has been a huge success, with 40 or 50 people coming for Friday night dinner, featuring Rabbi Cohen's homemade chicken soup, which is delicious!

In addition, we have homemade mini challah's made by a different member each month.

On January 3 we will have Fran Birnbaum's mini challahs, and on February 7 we will have mini challahs made by Leslie Diamond. In addition, are roasted chicken, salad, and other sides. In December Betsy Gamburg (Rabbi Cohen's wife) made the delicious mini challahs, and the No Name Chavurah brought the Oneg, with side dishes such as kugel made by Elaine Lederman, and mandel bread made by Rhona Shulman. We have a lot of great Jewish cooks at Beth Chaim!

The traditional reform service led by Rabbi Cohen is also very enjoyable, with one or more of the Chazanut group accompanying him on the Bima each week, and guest participation in the service by whoever is sponsoring the Oneg that week. A big thanks to our Oneg Committee of Kathie Bleier, Lois Kamoroff, and Susan Volsky for organizing a different group from amongst our membership to sponsor the Oneg each week. It has been a big success!

OPPORTUNITY TO HOST AN ONEG IN HONOR OF SOMEONE SPECIAL, A BIRTHDAY, AN ANNIVERSARY OR LIFE CYCLE EVENT

For the past several months, we have enjoyed a new model for Friday night services at Beth Chaim and we have seen more members attending services and staying to socialize at the Oneg.

It's been remarkable!!!

Our first Friday of the month Shabbat dinners with Rabbi Cohen's homemade chicken soup, challah, salad and chicken have been a big success.

If you have not attended Friday night services in a while, then you might try it. You may hear some words of wisdom from the Rabbi, some uplifting music or maybe a heartfelt or inspirational prayer.

Whatever your reason for coming, these Friday nights are a welcoming opportunity for Shabbat and fellowship and pressing the pause button, after a busy and hectic week, can be very meaningful.

The Oneg Committee has invited several groups already to get this program started and it's working. Our calendar through June is almost full but we do have a few available spots.

Please consider this - Sponsor an Oneg! One of us will help coordinate with you. Questions? Give us a call

Kathie Bleier
925.683.7084
Lois Kamoroff
925.786.5215
Susan Volsky
858.231.8829



Tu B'Shevat

How much do you know about this environmentally friendly holiday? Take this quiz from MyJewishLearning.com. Look for the answers on the next page.

- 1) On Tu Bishvat it is customary to eat
 - Only foods made out of the seven species
 - Foods made with any fruits
 - Foods imported from Israel
 - Schnitzel
- 3) Which of these is a popular Tu Bishvat activity in Israel?
 - Dancing in the streets
 - Reading the Book of Daniel
 - Planting trees
 - Sitting in the sukkah
- 4) What occasion does Tu Bishvat mark?
 - The middle of winter
 - The first day of spring
 - The new year for the trees
 - The day the rainy season begins
- 5) How many cups of wine are part of the Tu Bishvat Seder?
 - 2
 - 4
 - 6
 - Zero :(
- 6) What type of tree is typically planted in honor of a baby boy?
 - Elm
 - Apple
 - Ceder
 - Oak

A Prayer for Tu B'Shevat

A Kabbalistic Blessing for Tu Bish'vat, adapted fr. P'ri Ets Hadar (first published Tu Bish'vat seder, c. 18th century)

R' David Seidenberg, rebduvid86@gmail.com, author, *Kabbalah and Ecology*. More: neohasid.org/resources/tu_bishvat/

O God, who makes, forms, creates, and emanates the spiritual worlds! You made trees and plants grow from the ground in their shape and pattern above, so that "this tent of Creation may be joined together as one," to become a holy sanctuary.

And this full moon is the beginning of Your work to renew and ripen the fruit trees, for so will be filled the days of ripening the fruit of the supernal tree, "the Tree of Life in the midst of the garden." May it be Your will that our eating and blessing of these fruits now, and our meditating over their roots above, will arouse their spiritual sap* and make the flow of love and blessing and pure gift flow upon the trees, to make them grow and bloom, for good and for blessing, for good life and for peace.

May the whole of Creation return now to its original strength, and may the rainbow appear rejoicing and glorified in its colors. And may all the sparks of Divinity, scattered by our hands, or by the hands of our ancestors, or by the injury the first human committed against the fruit of the Tree, return to be included in the majestic might of the Tree of Life!

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!

❖ **Evan Levy and the Rabbinical Search Committee** for their thorough work to find our new rabbi.

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](#)

Tu B’Shevat

How much do you know about this environmentally friendly holiday? [Answers](#) to the quiz from MyJewishLearning.com.

On Tu Bishvat it is customary to eat

Foods made with any fruits

Which of these is a popular Tu Bishvat activity in Israel?

Planting trees

What occasion does Tu Bishvat mark?

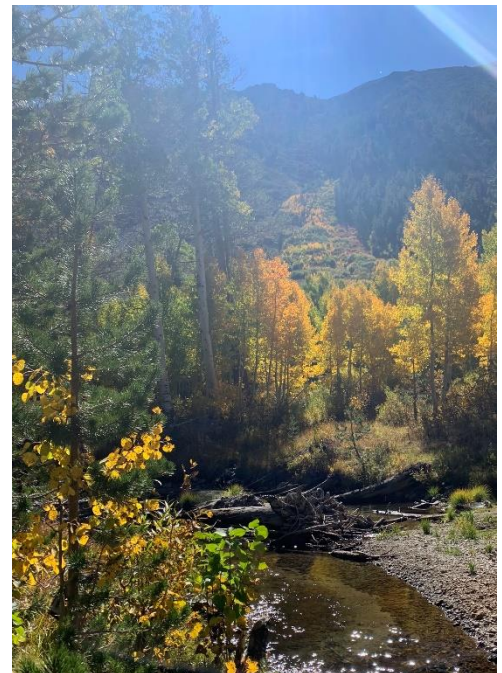
The new year for the trees

How many cups of wine are part of the Tu Bishvat Seder?

Four

What type of tree is typically planted in honor of a baby boy?

Cedar



Hanukkah at Beth Chaim was filled with lights and fun

Several Beth Chaim members shared prose or poetry to highlight a kavanah (intention) for Hanukkah and ongoing. Each night of Hanukkah one of these was sent in an email to our members. If you missed seeing them, they are linked [HERE](#). We are sure you will find some inspiration!

Thanks once again to Larry Candeub, Director of Religious Affairs, and Shelby Margolin, Beit Midrash principal, for planning our special Hanukkah holiday event, and all those who helped make it happen. Enjoy these photos from our Beth Chaim Hanukkah celebration.



Sisterhood

by Suzie Homer and Jackie Darvill, Sisterhood Co-Presidents



On Sunday, December 22, Sisterhood held its annual Hanukkah party. The Sisterhood Hanukkah party is one of the most attended activities that we do. Over 30 women participated in the potluck dinner and fun-filled gift exchange.

It was wonderful to see so many new and familiar faces. A big thank you to all that participated.

Moving forward, Sisterhood is planning a special event on February 8, 2025: "A Day of Celebrating Women and Nature". We are in the midst of coordinating with Brotherhood to plan an event together. And in addition to our continuing programs, we are also working on a Mah Jongg tournament in the fall!



Sisterhood will be providing Hamentashen for our Purim celebrations. In the past, this has been a fun way for us to contribute to our community while working together and bonding with our Sisters. This year we are tapping into our strong Chavurah program. We are asking each Chavurah participant to make the dough individually at home, (recipe will be provided) and then get together with their Chavurah group to roll, fill and bake the Hamentashen. Many Sisterhood Sisters are not participating in our Chavurah groups, and we want to make sure to include all who wish to contribute. If you want to participate, please contact Ruth Swedlow (ruthswedlow@yahoo.com, or 925-321-4112). Ruth will provide the recipe and set up a time for the activity either at Beth Chaim or at one of the homes. The plan is to complete the project by the end of February and have the Hamentashen in the freezer so that we can know exactly how many we have and how many more might be needed.

Brotherhood

by Burt Feldstein



Beth Chaim
Brotherhood

What We Do Together Matters



Beth Chaim's Sukkah take-down went extremely well this fall, thanks to a large, hardworking turnout. Seventeen members and Ellen Severson's 7th Grade Class showed up and dismantled and put away all the pieces in what appeared to be record time. Brotherhood thanks John Goldstein (our leader), Deborah Wechsler with her back saving pickup truck, Darrell Davidson, Diane Davidson, Sally Davidson, Bob Slomowitz, Aire Cohen, Jim Sorhagen, Marc Feder, Sam Ferman, Bill Fisher, Ray Wohlford, Curtis Mentz, Gary Zupo, Adam Heller, David Lubinsky and Burt Feldstein for providing their service to Beth Chaim.

Brotherhood scheduled a Sunday lunch on December 8th with hopes of attracting younger, working members. Unfortunately, it did not draw what we had hoped. We continue to think of activities that will appeal to younger, working men, and would like to hear any suggestions the Beth Chaim community may have. Please E-mail your suggestions to burtonfeldstein@gmail.com.

REMINDER:

Jan 31- Feb 2, 2025, Brotherhood Getaway

Cohen family compound near Placerville.

A fun weekend getaway for the brothers at the incredible Cohen compound. Hiking, fishing, skiing, archery and other fun activities. There is even a casino nearby!

Membership

Welcome back to our Newest Member Jo-Ann Paul

by Debbie Roof, Director, Membership



In 2024, we had 11 new member families join Beth Chaim!

Let's all continue to invite our friends and relatives who are not affiliated with a temple, to join us as guests at one of our upcoming events. If they have children who might be interested

in our religious school, please contact me or Shelby about scheduling a Preview Day for them to try out our Sunday School program.

The following 11 member families joined in 2024.

Anna & Hector Salazar, and daughter Gracie
Gillian & Paul Davis, and daughters Lana & Siena
Aerica Ostrov (returning member)
Janis & Ray Wohlford
Sharon Kantor & Greg Van Buskirk
Brian Fischer, and children Fiona & Mason
Debra & Gary Zupo, and children Quynlyn, Ezryn & Rowyn
Alison & Nieko Kroon, and children Isaac & Tzofia
Stacey & Brandon Quinn, and daughter Blake
Sally & Josh Davidson
Jo-Ann Paul

This month's article is about our newest member, Jo-Ann Paul, who used to be a member of Beth Chaim in the 1990's and has remained good friends with Lois Kamoroff all these years.

Beth Chaim: Tell us about your family.

Jo-Ann: We have two children. Our oldest, Andrew, lives in Las Vegas with his wife Robbyn and their son. Our daughter Pam and her husband Charlie Grossman live in Minnesota with their two children. My husband Mike passed away in March 2021.

Beth Chaim: Where did you grow up?

Jo-Ann: My husband and I were both born in Brooklyn, but our families moved to Bayside (Queens), NY, when I was five and Mike was seven. We lived in a very close-knit Jewish community. We all knew each other, and all went to everyone's family occasions. Mike and I both had all the same teachers in elementary school, and we both graduated from Bayside High School. We shared the same values and beliefs, but we did not start dating until Mike was in graduate school and I was in college.

I attended the State University of NY (SUNY) in Cortland. I received my master's degree at NYU in 1968 in what was called recreation for the ill and disabled. My specialty was setting up rehab programs for people with cerebral palsy. Mike went to Parsons College in Iowa for undergrad and got his MBA at Syracuse University. He became a bond salesman and worked in the stock market.

Beth Chaim: Tell us about your Jewish upbringing and education, etc.

Jo-Ann: I did not have a religious upbringing. Our family did not belong to the local temple or have any Jewish education. For Jewish holidays, we had all the traditional foods, like brisket, but it was never a religious event. My husband's family belonged to the local temple, Beth Shalom, in Flushing, NY. He had his Bar Mitzvah and brought more religious traditions to the holidays when we were married.

Mike was an officer who served in the navy in Viet Nam. Later he was stationed at Pearl Harbor. His commitment was 3 years, and he thought he would see the world in the navy. We lived in Forest Hills in Queens, then moved to New Jersey when our son Andrew was 2 ½ years old.

Beth Chaim: When did you move to Danville?

Jo-Ann: We moved to Danville in July 1983, to the same house I live in now. Mike opened an office in SF in investment banking for Chase Manhattan Bank. We knew two families who lived in Danville, so we chose to move here. I was surprised there were no school buses like we had back in NJ, and Mike worked in SF with NY stock exchange hours, so I could not go back to work. Our kids went to Charlotte Wood and Montair, and I needed to do all the driving, school volunteering, etc., which I enjoyed. Both of our kids graduated from San Ramon Valley High School.

Before we left NJ, Andrew had been studying for his Bar Mitzvah. We joined Temple Isaiah, but we chose to continue Andrew's Bar Mitzvah training on the phone with our temple in NJ. Andrew had his Bar Mitzvah in New Jersey, and we told everyone that our family traveled the farthest to attend his Bar Mitzvah. The rest of the family and friends were all living in NY and NJ.

Continued next page...

Pam had her Bat Mitzvah at Temple Isaiah, and both children were confirmed there. Afterwards, we dropped our membership there. Since we were living in Danville, we went to High Holiday services at Beth Chaim, before the current building was built. We joined in the 1990's and were in a Chavurah with Lois and Sandy Shalon. Mike used to play on the Beth Chaim baseball team, and he played tennis with Rabbi Dan at Crow Canyon.

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

Jo-Ann: I have worked part time in the travel industry for 34 years, so I like to travel a lot. I specialize in upscale cruises and tours. In March I will be going to Viet Nam and Thailand. I also travel to see my children's families, and other family and friends. I play golf at Crow Canyon, and Mah Jongg once a week at my house. When I am not playing golf, I like to work out.



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

Jo-Ann: I have always done a lot of volunteer work. I am interested in volunteering at Reutlinger again. Years ago, Mike and I used to lead a monthly Bingo program there once a month. Mike also taught guitar at the Vet Center in Concord for many years, which really changed the lives of many Vets, especially those who had PTSD, because it was so calming for them. The program is still going on. Mike found out through the VA Hospital that he had been exposed to Agent Orange, when he was on the Saigon River in 1967. Sadly, that is what contributed to his death in 2021.

I want to get very involved in Sisterhood. I attended the Sisterhood Hanukah party with Lois and want to sign up for a lot of Sisterhood activities. I have already been invited to join the L'Chaim Chavurah with Lois. I am looking forward to meeting a lot of people and developing a lot of new relationships.

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.

Children's Birthdays

Name	Birthday	Age	Name	Birthday	Age
Chloe Leftik	Jan 3	10	Cody Miller	Feb 2	5
Blakely Doughtie	Jan 9	1	Rochelle Abelmann	Feb 2	14
Blake Azicri	Jan 11	11	Dominic Guzman	Feb 11	6
Ronen Jain	Jan 11	16	Violet Brors	Feb 16	17
Emmeline Millington	Jan 23	14	Amelia Kogan	Feb 20	10
Dax Azicri	Jan 30	7	Alexis Kogan	Feb 20	10
			Neela Campbell	Feb 26	9

Wedding Anniversaries

Names	Date	Years	Names	Date	Years
Eric & Eileen Kahn	Jan 3	42	Jonathan & Rachel Cohen	Feb 8	9
Bob & Trish Slomowitz	Jan 5	44	Andrew & Nancy Orgel	Feb 10	45
Elliot & Cameron Binder	Jan 15	19	Ruth & David Swedlow	Feb 11	56
Brad & Janet Lieber	Jan 16	36	Steve & Melissa Hejtmanek	Feb 21	11
Lou Weckstein & Karin Denevi	Jan 23	36	Paul & Patricia Yamshon	Feb 24	40
			Scott & Catherine Heller	Feb 26	35

Membership Anniversaries – November and December

Names	Years	Names	Years
Scott & Naomi Ehrlich	25	Kim & Michael Thompson	13
Harold & Janet Freiman	23	Sheila Kaplan	12
Craig & Debbie Hertz	22	Erin & Andy Sacks	11
Ted Mendelson	22	Jonathan & Rachel Cohen	8
Rick Oshay	22	Sam & Debbie Ferman	7
Jerry & Laura Raney	21	David & Leslie Diamond	5
John & Jody Dice	18	Lou Weckstein & Karin Denevi	4
Glenn & Julie Sulzberg	15	Jacqueline Darvill	3
Robert Michaud	14		

Generosity

"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

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

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

If you would like to make a donation you 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 or to honor someone the family is notified. The generous support of Beth Chaim 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

Brotherhood	to cover 50% of our texting costs on Clearstream
Michelle Ferber	In memory of Dr. Herbert Rubin father of Karyn Fishman
Barry & Laura Denenberg	In memory of Dr. Herbert Rubin father of Karyn Fishman
Deborah Wechsler & Bruce Bilodeau	In memory of Dr. Herbert Rubin father of Karyn Fishman
Linda Ahern	In honor of Dave Messing
Ira Book	In memory of beloved sister Beverly Ann Camp
Barry & Laura Denenberg	In memory of Roy Levine
Paul & Patricia Yamshon	Speedy Recovery Grace Munoz
Olga Sokhor	In honor of Judith Markowitz with gratitude for her kindness.
Paul & Patricia Yamshon	Speedy recovery Marty Goldberg
Rick Ferber	
Barry & Laura Denenberg	In memory of Charlotte Markowitz
Michelle Ferber	In memory of Charlotte Markowitz

Building Fund

Larry & Barbara Candeub	In memory of Marty Bach
Larry & Barbara Candeub	In memory of Bradford Goldman Baruh
Larry & Barbara Candeub	In memory of Gene Platin
Larry & Barbara Candeub	In honor of Isaac Ehrlich Mazel Tov on the birth of grandson of Naomi and Scott Ehrlich
Larry & Barbara Candeub	In memory of Jon Feder/Herbert Rubin/Roy Levine/Bernard Talon/Stephen Butter

Religious School

Ellen Rosenbluth & Mark Garetz	in honor of the birth of their first grandchild
Jeff Reitzes	

High Holy Day Donations

Marci Piccus	
Jo-Ann Paul	
Rhoda Messing	
Dave & Debbie Rosenberg	Honoring the life of Don Rosenberg
Michael Levine	



It's easy to help our Beit Midrash! Simply visit escrip.com/wheretoeam 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)

by Naomi Ehrlich, Director, Tikkun Olam



**Beth Chaim
Congregation and St.
Timothy's Episcopal
Church are co-hosts of
the Winter Nights
Shelter** at St. Timothy's
Parish Hall,

January 6, 2025 - January
20, 2025. We need many helping hands to
provide a warm, safe haven for the shelter's
guests, homeless families with children.

Winter Nights Shelter is our largest social
action project and over the years, has
involved hundreds of our BCC members and
their children. With your help, we can provide
a warm, safe haven for homeless families with
children during their two-week stay.

Please select one of the opportunities by
clicking on a button image below for signups.
If you have any questions or concerns, please
contact me . Thank you for your continued
support for BCC's Tikkun Olam!

Thank you everyone for your continued
support and generosity!

[Food and non-
food donations](#)

[Meal Teams](#)

[Monetary
Donations](#)

[Setup and
Take-down](#)

[Children's
activities and
Weekend help](#)

Here is a **communication from the Food Bank of Contra
Costa and Solano Counties:** For nearly 50 years the Food Bank
of Contra Costa and Solano has been leading the fight to end
hunger, in partnership with our community and in service of our
neighbors.

You have an opportunity to make a lasting impact in your
community with a donation during the annual Holiday Dinner
Drive. The past few years have been challenging for many of us
— and they have changed the face of hunger in our community.
More of our neighbors have experienced food insecurity for the
first time and will need years to fully recover.

**BETH CHAIM CONGREGATION
HOLIDAY DINNER DRIVE**
Benefits the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano

The Food Bank distributes enough food for
400,000 meals every month. *The need is great.*

ONE DOLLAR WILL FUND 2 MEALS	\$36 \$72 \$144 PROVIDES	72 144 288 MEALS
---	--	--

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

SCAN ME
QR code for online donation

ONLINE
foodbankccs.org/dinner
Select DONATE NOW and complete your contribution.

MAIL
Check payable to: **Food Bank CCS**
Memo: **Beth Chaim HDD**

Beth Chaim HDD
1800 Holbrook Drive
Danville CA 94506

BETH CHAIM CONGREGATION

FOOD BANK
of Contra Costa & Solano

The Food Bank is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Donations are tax-deductible.

We currently provide food 400,000 times per month to seniors,
children, working parents and community members struggling
with the high cost of living in our area. During the holidays, this
need will certainly increase.

Your support of the Holiday Dinner Drive will provide
community members with meals — but just as importantly,
with breathing room. With your help putting food on the table,
more of your neighbors will have the funds for essential
medicines, car repairs or childcare while they are at work.
Please consider making a generous gift. Your support means so
much.

If you have any questions, please contact me at
(925) 890-3875 or email me at jomaja3@aol.com.

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



Help Manage Our Waste – Tikkun Olam Starts at Home!



**Here are a few
housekeeping tips for the
next time you are at Beth
Chaim 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.

for an
Amazing Selection of
• Tallitot &
• Kippot &
• Gifts...

Visit
Afikomen JUDAICA
Your Jewish Lifestyle Store
www.afikomen.com
510.655.1977 3042 Claremont Ave Berkeley 94705

925.487.5009
www.simchasisters.com
Full Service Event Planning

**Now Offering
Virtual & Hybrid
Event Management*

simcha
sisters

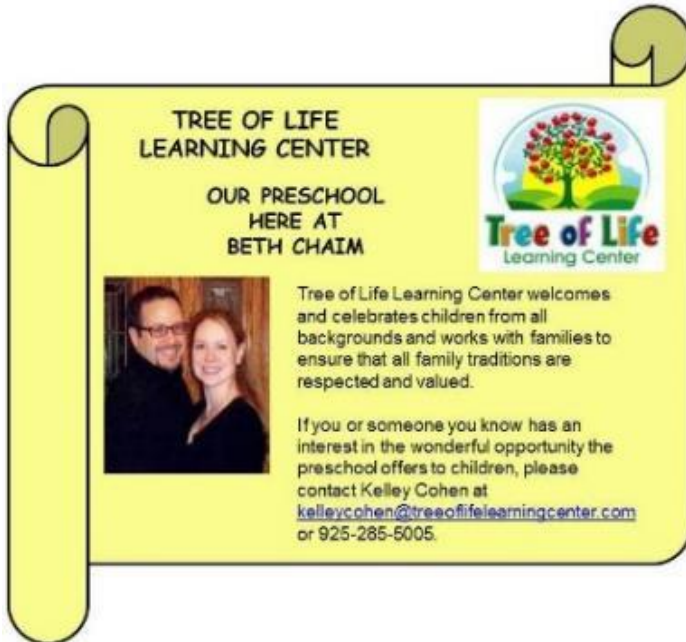
CELEBRATING ALL YOUR
JEWISH LIFECYCLE EVENTS

MP Minuteman
Press
Lafayette
The First & Last Step In Printing.

Ron Palsa
3289 Mt. Diablo Boulevard • Lafayette, California 94549
Phone: (925) 945-6006 • Fax: (925) 945-1610
Email: mmpwc@value.net


Education

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




**TREE OF LIFE
LEARNING CENTER**

OUR PRESCHOOL
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@treeoflifelarningcenter.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@treeoflifelarningcenter.com

Torah Tots and Tot Shabbat!



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



Torah Tots

Sundays
10:00am

February 9th
Tu B'shvat!



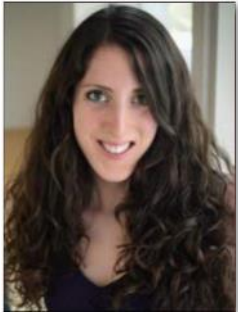
Tot Shabbat

Fridays
5:30pm

January 31st
February 28th



Grades K-7



Shelby Margolin
Principal, Beit Midrash

January always means one thing at the Beit Midrash: the start of our B'nei Mitzvah season! We will kick things off with a special Ruach service on January 31st honoring our 7th graders and giving them an opportunity to lead a service as a class.

Each child will then have their own Bar or Bat Mitzvah during a Saturday morning service at 10am. I hope you will consider joining us as we celebrate their special simchas:

- February 15: Zoe Karatov
- March 22: Naomi Jain
- April 5: Ari Goldshteyn
- May 3: Sophia Naslavsky
- May 10: Violet Dublin
- May 24: Ben Wikstrom
- June 7: Max Eisenberg

As we move through this process with our 7th graders, I reflect on ways I can make the B'nei Mitzvah process smoother and more meaningful for our younger children. This year, we have put a lot more time and focus on supporting children's foundational Hebrew skills. Rabbi Cohen does T'filah on Sunday mornings, giving children more time to practice praying in a group. If you want a little joy in your morning, come to the sanctuary and see a mass of children racing to the bimah to open the arc!

Our 3rd and 4th grade Hebrew and Sunday School are also utilizing a new Hebrew workbook to align what children do on Sundays and midweek. This creates a structure that supports children's learning. We know that these skills will pay dividends each year as they progress towards having their Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

We are also extra excited for our Ruach services second semester. Following our B'nei Mitzvah Kick-Off Ruach, each service will honor a special moment for a group in our Beit Midrash. These are special ways for each group to mark a moment in their Jewish journey. Again, these are wonderful ways for our greater Beth Chaim community to support our children so please mark these in your calendar:

- Jan 31: B'nei Mitzvah Kick Off
- Feb 28: 3rd graders receive their siddurim (prayer books)
- March 28: 6th graders receive their chumashim (Torah books)
- April 25: Service honoring our Madrichim
- May 16: 7th grade graduation

With Gratitude,

Morah Shelby Meyer Margolin (she/her/hers)

Principal, Beth Chaim Beit Midrash
educator@bethchaim.com

Please note that my days off are Friday and Saturday. I'll return any emails sent during that time on Sunday!



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

Please 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.



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

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.



Zoe Karatov – March 23

Zoe is 12 years old and a 7th grader at Diablo Vista Middle School. She enjoys playing the clarinet in the school Concert Band and Jazz Band. Zoe has enjoyed religious school since the beginning and her teachers. She has watched both her brother Ethan and sister Abigail go through the B'nei process and is excited it's her turn on the bima. We are very proud of Zoe's dedication and commitment to her religious studies and excited for her future. Mazel Tov Zoe!

Yahrzeits

Zichronam L'vracha – May Their Memories be a Blessing

Name	Date	Relationship
Bernice Wiener	Jan 1	Mother of Greg Wiener
Leonard Yamshon	Jan 3	Father of Paul Yamshon
Mel Eiges	Jan 4	Father of Peter Eiges
Michael Kamoroff	Jan 6	Husband of Lois Kamoroff
James Harley	Jan 7	Father of Trish Slomowitz
Mila Slomowitz	Jan 7	Mother of Bob Slomowitz
Herbert Gedacht	Jan 7	Father of Rhona Shulman
Lawrence Murray Bowman	Jan 7	Father of Stacey Levy
Carol Wechsler	Jan 7	Mother of Deborah Wechsler
Pat Hejtmanek	Jan 7	Mother of Steve Hejtmanek
Betty Cohen	Jan 7	Mother of Sheryl Bonn
Albert Mazer	Jan 12	Father of Marc Mazer
Reva Lee	Jan 13	Sister of Bobbi Bernstein
Lucille Ware	Jan 13	Mother of Gary Ware
Nathan Kantor	Jan 14	Father of Sharon Kantor
Brenda Diane Hackel	Jan 15	Step-Mother of Jamie Hyams
Shirley Gedacht	Jan 16	Mother of Rhona Shulman
Nancy Lebowicz	Jan 17	Sister of Debbie Roof
Ari Mazer	Jan 18	Son of Marc Mazer & Susan Talon-Mazer
Sidney Churgel	Jan 18	Father of Ellen Waskey
Annette Norman	Jan 19	Mother of Shelley Norman
LeRoy Golman	Jan 20	Father of Janet Lieber
Sol Leavitt	Jan 21	Father of Debbie Roof
Anatol "Tony" Karatov	Jan 23	Father of Michael Karatov
Julius Bernstein	Jan 23	Father of Neil Bernstein
Harry Hyams	Jan 24	Father of Michael Hyams
Nancy Cook	Jan 25	Mother of Glen Schabacker
Rosalind Isacson	Jan 26	Mother of Sally Klein
Bernice Kulwin	Jan 27	Mother of Harry Kulwin
Peter Kahn	Jan 29	Father of Eric Kahn
Sylvia Kahn	Jan 29	Mother of Eric Kahn
Natalie Brownstein	Jan 31	Mother of Lynne Gross
Mollie Feldstein	Jan 31	Mother of Burt Feldstein



SINAI
MEMORIAL CHAPEL
CHEVRA KADISHA
FD1523

Sharon Brusman
Managing Funeral Director FDR4186

sbrusman@sinaichapel.org
3415 Mt. Diablo Boulevard
Lafayette, California 94549

T: 925.962.3636
F: 925.962.1636
www.sinaichapel.org



GAN SHALOM

Featuring a reserved garden for Beth Chaim Congregation
Individual Plots and Family Estates
1100 Bear Creek Road, Briones, CA 94563

To reserve a site please contact
Joshua Alpert, Managing Funeral Director,
Sinaï Memorial Chapel Chevra Kadishah
3415 Mt. Diablo Boulevard, Lafayette, CA 94549
925-962-3636

Yahrzeits, cont'd

Zichronam L'vracha – May Their Memories be a Blessing

Name	Name	Name
Beatrice Meyers	Feb 3	Mother of Fran Patterson
Allen Creighton	Feb 4	Father of Robyn Mizes
Marilyn Ehrlich	Feb 5	Mother of Scott Ehrlich
Evelyn Mendelson	Feb 6	Mother of Ted Mendelson
Michael Birnbaum	Feb 7	Husband of Fran Birnbaum
Elizabeth Kelley	Feb 9	Mother of Kathie Bleier
Rosalyn Bronstein	Feb 10	Mother of Jon Bronstein
Annabelle Rothman	Feb 10	Mother of Nadine Rosenzweig
David Goldberg	Feb 12	Father of Martin Goldberg
Fred Finder	Feb 12	Father of Scott Finder
Brent Simpson	Feb 13	Father of Gene Simpson
Zoe Orgel	Feb 14	Mother of Andy Orgel
Jerome Stuhlberg	Feb 14	Father of Jody Dice
Mahlon Bilodeau	Feb 14	Father of Bruce Bilodeau
Leo Boruchoff	Feb 16	Father of Nancy Orgel
Bebe Waltrip	Feb 18	Mother of Mat Waltrip
Murray Rosenbluth	Feb 18	Father of Ellen Rosenbluth
Robert Kelley	Feb 18	Father of Kathie Bleier
Michael Koumelis	Feb 19	Father of Linda Carp
Seymour Zimmerman	Feb 21	Father of Leslie Diamond
David Elvidge	Feb 22	Brother of Barbara Candeb
Sharon Shapiro	Feb 22	Mother of Ben Shapiro
Dolores DeNevi	Feb 23	Mother of Karin Denevi
Robert Dorinson	Feb 25	Brother of Mary Day
Mary Elizabeth Kelley	Feb 25	Sister of Kathie Bleier
Bernard Denenberg	Feb 25	Father of Barry Denenberg
Joseph Herlich	Feb 26	Father of Rae Corr
Allen "Skip" Creighton	Feb 27	Brother of Robyn Mizes
Daryl Homer	Feb 27	Husband of Suzie Homer

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.

CERTIFIED BARTON READING AND SPELLING TUTOR. Nine years' experience. Certified at a Masters Level. Have worked and improved the reading and spelling skills of 1st to 8th graders (but the program is beneficial for anyone over the age of 5). If your child is struggling with reading and spelling and traditional phonics programs are not helping, Barton may be the answer. Don't wait until your child falls further behind. Contact Pam Messing at 925.548.5307 or pjmessing@hotmail.com. References available upon request.

BINGER DATAMANAGEMENT GROUP LLC. We provide efficient and effective ways to analyze, track and report data. We offer a wide range of services from simple ways to slice and dice data using spreadsheets to the development of robust business intelligence systems. Scott C Binger Founder and CEO (646) 389-2364, scottb@bingergroup.com.

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>.

Beth Chaim Board of Directors, 2025

President	Arie Cohen
Vice President	Scott Ehrlich
Vice President	Marc Feder
Treasurer	Elliot Binder
Secretary	David Swedlow
Officer of Religious Affairs	Larry Candeub
Director of Building	Keith Brors
Director of Education	Jeff Reitzes
Director of Fundraising	Sasha Kantor
Director of Membership	Debbie Roof
Director of Social Action	Naomi Ehrlich
Director at Large (Administration)	Deborah Wechsler
Director at Large	Tanya James
Director at Large (Chesed)	Kim Thompson
Director at Large (Marketing/Comm.)	Ellen Waltrip
Past President	Jonathan Corr
Brotherhood President	Burt Feldstein
Sisterhood Co-President	Jackie Darvill
Sisterhood Co-President	Suzie Homer

*Please contact the office at
925-736-7146 or
info@bethchaim.com to get in
touch with any Board Member.
Full contact information is
available to our Beth Chaim
congregants on our website in
the Member Area section.*



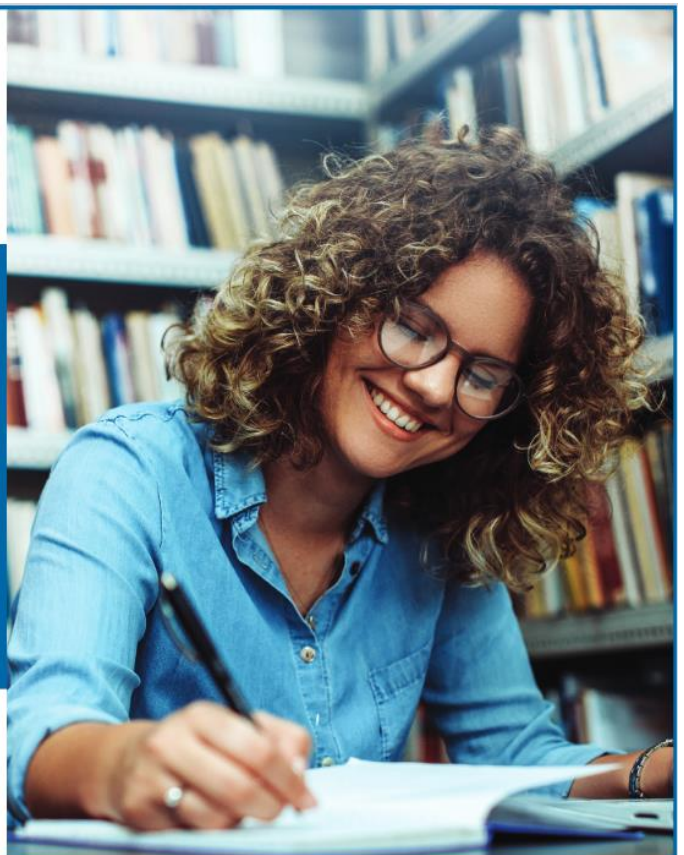
HEBREW FREE LOAN
INTEREST-FREE LENDING SINCE 1897

INTEREST-FREE STUDENT LOANS

**\$10K/year for
Undergraduate, Graduate &
Vocational Students**

www.hflasf.org

Contact Judith Markowitz at 628-246-0153 for more information.



Beth Chaim Congregation
1800 Holbrook Drive
Danville, CA 94506

LET THE COHEN BLEIER GROUP HELP MOVE YOUR MEZUZAH



AJ COHEN | 925.819.2747 | AJ@CohenBleierGroup.com | CalRE #01484144
JASON BLEIR | 925.997.7373 | Jason@CohenBleierGroup.com | CalRE #01484014

WWW.COHENBLEIRGROUP.COM



Not intended as a solicitation if your property is already listed by another broker. Affiliated real estate agents are independent contractor sales associates, not employees. ©2022 Coldwell Banker. All Rights Reserved. Coldwell Banker and the Coldwell Banker logos are trademarks of Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC. The Coldwell Banker®System is comprised of company owned offices which are owned by a subsidiary of Realogy Brokerage Group LLC and franchised offices which are independently owned and operated. The Coldwell Banker System fully supports the principles of the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Opportunity Act.