



# April 2016 Newsletter

**CONGREGATION  
B'NAI ABRAHAM**

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## **FROM THE DESK OF THE RABBI**

One of the greatest lessons of Torah is that the generation that left Egypt perished before the children of Israel could enter Israel. Even Moses was not allowed to enter into the Promised Land. The Bible teaches, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as a holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them."

At one time in my life, I struggled to accept how God could be so unappreciative of Moses. After all Moses had sacrificed for God and the Israelites, why would God not allow Moses into the Promised Land? What could be so profound of a mistake deserving of this limitation? The mistake, we are taught, is that Moses disobeyed a direct command from God. God commanded Moses to speak to a rock for water to come forth, but Moses instead struck a rock.

We are led to believe that Moses' error was that he took credit for himself rather than giving credit to God. By striking the rock, the Israelites were led to believe it was Moses, not God, who was responsible for the miracle. When we pour our hearts and souls into sacred work, we might be led to believe that we should deserve reward. This is natural of humans and it is important to say, "thank you" in a dignified way. However, we should not be so taken with ourselves that we believe that our progress is by our efforts alone.

Many have offered their words of gratitude, thanking me for the progress our community has made in the two and half years I have been here. While solid rabbinic leadership does matter, the evolution of our temple is only possible because of our congregational members' efforts and the opportunities presented to us by God.

It is hard to accept that even rabbis are truly only placeholders in the history of a congregation. Moses was only a placeholder in the journey between Egypt and the Holy Land. His teachings endure primarily because of God and the Jewish people - not because of Moses. We all struggle with this concept, much the same as Moses. This was a hard lesson for Moses to learn.

There are many clergypersons in town who truly understand the biblical mandate, but there is one who currently exemplifies this practice. Reverend Steve Robison has been a fixture at Otterbein United Methodist for as long as most folks can remember. This year, he will step down from his position. In doing so, he also will vacate many of his community roles. Already, I have been honored with one of those roles, serving as the lead clergy representative at the Chamber of Commerce annual banquet. Soon, I will serve in a second of his roles where I will humbly serve as the treasurer of the Hagerstown Area Religious Council.

From first hand experience, Steve exemplifies the biblical lesson. He is there to give me counsel when I seek it. Second, in time, he will help both Otterbein and Hagerstown -- but in new and -- yet important -- ways. Most of all, he places his trust and support in me and in future leadership. He demonstrates a self-awareness of placeholders in the sacred journey of life.

If this principle is true of our religious leaders, so to is it true of us all.

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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

As my term nears its conclusion I think of it not as an end, but a beginning.

This congregation has accomplished a tremendous amount of good work in very recent years. We have welcomed about 30 new families into our midst, events are well attended, fundraising goals have been met or exceeded and we are in a more stable financial position than we were two years ago. And, although I am in the top leadership position, these were only accomplished by the dedication of many.

B'nai Abraham has a 124-year history of ups and downs, which you can read about in the history written by Jerry Falke for our 120th anniversary celebration. We've had a stable home here on East Baltimore Street and experienced huge change in all aspects of the community. Changes are not going to cease, though, and the whole world is experiencing a more rapid pace of change.

That's a fact of life, and while I sometimes have to run to keep up, I'm OK with it. The ability to innovate as circumstances change is a hallmark of Reform Judaism. Our belief in the basic tenets of Judaism, that we have been created in God's image in order to be His partners in *Tikkun Olam*, repairing or improving the world, does not mean that the methods should never change. After all, we aren't still performing animal sacrifices and trudging around the desert.

What we *are* doing is continuously learning, experimenting and adapting. That is why this feels like a beginning to me. We older dogs will be adding some new tricks to our traditions as we discover how the next generation of leaders will be engaged in keeping Judaism alive. But please notice, I said, "adding" to our traditions.

It is certainly not wise to throw out the baby with the bath water and that is not what we will do here, either. Familiar, cherished customs must not completely disappear. In fact we are essentially commanded to teach them to our children. They must learn the whys and wherefores of why we do what we do and then find ways to integrate them into the world they are building.

We are going to have some extraordinary opportunities in the coming years. It may take some mental yoga to develop our flexibility, but I, for one, choose to believe we more than have that capacity.

Shalom,

Rachel



**DONATIONS**

**General Fund**

In memory of Pearl Kruger from Edith & Bruce Edwards

**Endowment Fund**

In memory of Gayl Weiss from Marlene & Jerry Falke

In memory of Gayl Weiss from Brigie & Dick Greenwald

In memory of Gayl Weiss from Hannah & Ed Baer

In memory of Gayl Weiss from Dorothy & Mel Greenwald

In memory of Gayl Weiss from Debby & Harvey Weinberger

In memory of Gayl Weiss from Janet & Mansoor Emral Shaool

In memory of Pearl Kruger from Monda & Sandy Sagalkin

In memory of Pearl Kruger from Brigie & Dick Greenwald

In memory of Pearl Kruger from Hannah & Ed Baer

In memory of Pearl Kruger from Mansoor & Janet Emral Shaool

For the Yahrzeit of Magarete Fifield from Monda & Sandy Sagalkin

In memory of Esther Goodman & Pauline Reinkraut from Brigie & Dick Greenwald

**Jeanne Jacobs Fund**

In memory of Pearl Kruger from Randi & Scott Numbers

**DATES TO REMEMBER**

Sunday	April	10	Brunch
Sunday	April	17	Jewish Food Festival We will need EVERYONE'S help!
Sunday	May	1	"90 for 90: A Tribute to Jeanne Jacobs" Gala
Friday	May	8	Yom HaShoah Commemoration & Shabbat Service: Holocaust survivor Mark Strauss will be speaking; not to be missed.

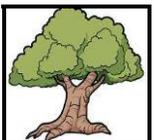
**"90 FOR 90"**

By the time you get this newsletter you will have received your invitations and your raffle tickets to our May Gala "90 for 90: A Tribute to Jeanne Jacobs." Please buy or sell them as soon as possible. This will be a fun event. Many people have been working hard to make it a wonderful tribute to Jeanne.

If you know any of her students, please encourage them to contact the office or Monda Sagalkin for tickets. It will be a special moment for Jeanne to see her former students honor her. We hope to get as many of her students as we can find to attend. We will have books of her favorite recipes to sell and many beautiful auction items. The food, prepared by our own French chef David Rosenthal, will be delicious.

May 1 at the Temple from 5-8 pm is the time. We are counting on you to support the Temple by coming.

In order to save a tree or two, printed calendars are only available upon request. Contact Michelle in the office to arrange to pick up a copy.



## NOTES FROM THE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Last month our students---including the youngsters in pre-school--made dozens of hamantaschen under the direction of Lisa Schiffman (our lead preschool teacher), Laura Rohrer and Sarah Schiffres. Many thanks to our baking instructors! The hamantaschen, which turned out delicious of course, were a big hit at the Purim Carnival.

On Sunday, after their regular classes, the students joined Rabbi Plost on the bima, for his reading of the megillah in English. And then the real fun began with our Carnival!

Now the Hebrew month of Nissan is almost upon us and we are looking forward to learning about Passover/Pesach and the Israelites' exodus from slavery in Egypt (Mizraim). Perhaps this month's cookery lesson will include some charoset?

### *"90 FOR 90: A Tribute to Jeanne Jacobs"*

## Mark your calendar! May 1, 2016

Congregation B'nai Abraham will be hosting a Gala to celebrate our beloved congregant, Jeanne Jacobs on her ninetieth birthday. There will be delicious food, drinks and special entertainment.

Additionally there will be exclusive auctions (live and silent) to help raise funds to support our synagogue. We are asking members of the congregation to donate items for the auction that will help us to raise money for the sustainability of our synagogue.

Here are some suggestions of what you might donate:

- Restaurant gift certificates
- Bed and Breakfast gift certificates
- Wine tasting gift certificates
- Theatre tickets
- Sporting event tickets
- Original art: paintings, photos, sculptures, pottery
- Hand-knit items: scarves, afghans, baby items, etc.
- Judaica items
- Themed gift baskets such as wine, food or pet
- Spa/beauty certificates
- Designer handbags, totes or travel bags

Thank you for helping with this important fundraiser. If you would like to discuss your donation, please contact:

Robbie Greenberg  
[301-797-7265](tel:301-797-7265)      [robbieg56@gmail.com](mailto:robbieg56@gmail.com)  
 or Barby Weiss  
[301-791-6098](tel:301-791-6098)      [Barby@myactv.net](mailto:Barby@myactv.net)

We will be happy to discuss your generous contribution. Items may be dropped off at Robbie Greenberg's house.

We are able to keep our annual support low because the congregation supports our fundraisers and we know you will love this one. The tickets will be sent out on March 16. If you know anyone who is not a member of the temple but who was a student, colleague or friend of Jeanne's please let them know of this opportunity to celebrate Jeanne's contribution to the community.

## YAHREZEITS

<u>April 1, 2016</u>	<u>April 8, 2016</u>	<u>April 15, 2016</u>	<u>April 22, 2016</u>	<u>April 29, 2016</u>
* Ruben Oscar Framm	* Rachel Schindler	Joseph Ginsberg	* Ruben Greenwald	* Nahum Moch
* Pauline Reinkraut	* Morris Lazarus Smith	Saul Miller	* Ella Lyon	Meyer Cohen
* Evelyn W. Ruben	Dora S. Nathanson	Walter Schwartz	Samuel Mansh	Sylvia Duitch
Sol Lachman	Yaffa Schneider	Stanley Casanove	* Israel Geber	* Esther Malke Gray
* Isadore Livov	Morton Gidon	Selis Augustus	* Simon J. Verovsky	* Harry Cooper
Jerome Katz	Leah Mildred Ginsberg	* Helen Lyon	* Samuel Weidenfeld	* Benjamin Schindler
* Arthur Alan Levine	* Sophie Eisenberg	Robert Shestack	* Rosa Berman	Leah Medin Benesch
Evelyn Chatkin	Annette Nassau	Irvin Singer	Holly Singer	* Helen S. Dodson
Annie Selzer	Molly Oppenheim	* Rose Taylor	Stephen Aronow	Daisy Lahn
* Goldie Kaplan	* Morris Klein	Henry Cramer	Louis Lieberman	Lillian Lieberman
Jack Metzner	* William L. Meyers	* Hannah Cohn	Adriano Bello	Phyllis L. Van Camp
Ida Feldman	Carrie Perkowsky	* Rose J. Edner	Elly Kiselik	* Lillian M. Roth
* Jacob Auerbach	* Meyer Fribush	* Lena L. Lyon	* Arthur Weiss	Moses Garonzik
* Helena Roza	Bernard S. Lubin	* Harry Levin	Constance Cramer	Mollie S. Mansh
Henrietta Simon	Elsa Okun	* Milton Lyon	* Henry Harris	
	Ronni Greenwald	* Henry Weinberg		
		Roy Nassau		
		Marvin H.M. Slavick		

\* Denotes  
Yahrzeit Plaque  
in Sanctuary

## ONEGS - MARCH SCHEDULE

Friday April	1	Kim & David Hanan, Chairs; Dee & Ben Chlebnikow
Friday April	8	Robin & Bill Hollin, Chairs; Debbie & Leon Cress
Friday April	15	Marlene & Jerry Falke, Chairs; Amelia & Steve Kasinof
Friday April	22	No Religious Service
Friday April	29	Sharon Wagshal, Chair; Lieba & Jerry Cohen

## KVELLING

Mazel Tov to Erica Greenwald. She was a recent recipient of the Carson Scholarship Fund and was one of only 650 students nationally to receive this honor.

Congrats also to Marjorie Grumbacher for again being recognized in the Herald-Mail for her 44 years of volunteer service at MCI and for being a founder of the Community Corrections Services Committee.

## LIFELONG LEARNING

Sunday      April 10      Brunch      10 AM

The speaker is Charles Belfoure, author of *THE PARIS ARCHITECT*. Congregants are encouraged to read the book, but it is not a prerequisite to attending the brunch and participating in the lively discussion.

**THANK YOU FROM THE PRESIDENT**

The last of the popcorn has been swept away, nary a crumb of hamentaschen is left, and, as the saying goes, "A good time was had by all." Our Purim celebrations were, indeed, celebrations. Rabbi Plost gave his ever-present encouragement and support, and he helped us fulfill the obligation of hearing Megillat Esther not once, but twice! The noise made drowning out the name of you-know-who was deafening, and Ben Chlebnikow may have to check to be sure there was no cracking of the foundation as a result.

This year's Corned Beef Cabaret was another smash hit that left us entering Shabbat with happy spirits. The Religious School had their own celebration, not to mention having the hamentaschen-making party. These kids have really gotten good at this. Our second community Purim Carnival built upon the success of the previous year and we welcomed many more people from the neighborhood.

And, just like the story of our redemption in Shushan, these observances and festivities included a huge cast of characters. It is especially noteworthy that in each case, there was an "experienced" CBA volunteer mentoring and teaching others; a sharing of knowledge that is a cornerstone of keeping the Jewish people alive. Advisors and organizers included the rabbi and the religious practices committee, our school administrator Barb Schwab, 1st VP Monda Sagalkin & Carole Lafferman, Syd Machat & Doug Becker (cabaret), Nyna & Abe Lachman (corned beef supper), and Buck Macht, Julie Ferron and Anne Hollander (carnival).

We are very grateful for the help, time and talent that each person named here has generously offered. And, though each individual name is associated with only one aspect of the celebration, know that many volunteers were involved, in one way or another, in multiple aspects.

For the delicious corned beef dinner & decorations: Mike Armel; Leah Neveil; Elizabeth Kantor-Bright, Jeff Bright and daughters Michaela and Sarah.

For the Cabaret: Doug Lieberman; Dave Ferguson; David Loy; Howard Mendelsohn; and performers, Al Schiff, Jim Oppenheim, Sybil Schiffman, Carol Mendelsohn, Preston Gmernicki and Reese Gmernicki; and thanks especially to Syd for bringing us his professional musician friends from Frederick.

For the Carnival: David Van Camp, Eliza Van Camp, Vic Kronstadt, Michelle Rosenbluth, Julie & Kiriah Whitener, Laura Wilson & Asher & Aliyah Newberry, Betsy Rosenthal & Jenny Sherman, David & Courtney Hanan (and Courtney's friend), Hana Fuller, Tyrone Johnson, Leon & Ruth Foreman.

Behind the scenes: Randi Numbers, Sharon Wagshal, Marcia Miller

And of course thanks to our staff members Donnie Wingfield and Michelle Jardine for their flexibility and support.

Hopefully, this list includes all the helpers. If anyone's name was missed, it was purely inadvertent. Let me know so you can be included, too.

Oh, and *todah rabah* to all who made it a point to support and celebrate together.

Bottom line -- you folks are awesome!



## CARING COMMITTEE

The Caring Committee provides care, companionship and assistance to members of our congregation and their immediate families in need due to ill health, age or non-financial crisis or catastrophe.

Chair: Sharon Metzner - receives initial calls from the rabbi: [sharonmetz@aol.com](mailto:sharonmetz@aol.com) (301) 739-2972  
 Robbie Greenberg - for meals, as needed: [robbieg56@gmail.com](mailto:robbieg56@gmail.com) (301) 797-7265  
 Barby Weiss - for transportation needs: [barby@myactv.net](mailto:barby@myactv.net) (301) 791-6098  
 Sharon Wagshal - for home visits or outings: [sharwag@aol.com](mailto:sharwag@aol.com) (301) 797-3220

## WHOOZIT

### Big Cheeks

A boy was born the grandson of slaves in a poor neighborhood of New Orleans known as the "Back of Town." His father abandoned the family when the child was an infant. His mother became a prostitute and the boy and his sister had to live with their grandmother.

Early in life he proved to be gifted for music and with three other kids he sang in the streets of New Orleans. His first gains were coins that were thrown to them.

A Jewish family, Karnofsky, who had emigrated from Lithuania to the USA, had pity for the 7-year-old boy and brought him into their home, initially giving him 'work' in the house, to feed this hungry child.

He remained and slept in this Jewish family's home where, for the first time in his life, he was treated with kindness and tenderness.

When he went to bed, Mrs. Karnofsky sang him a Russian lullaby. He would sing it with her.

Later, he learned to sing and play several Russian and Jewish songs.

Over time, this boy became the adopted son of this family.

As was the custom in the Jewish families, the Karnofskys gave him money to buy his first musical instrument. They sincerely admired his musical talent.

Later, when he became a professional musician and composer, he used these Jewish melodies in compositions, such as 'St. James Infirmary' and 'Go Down Moses'.

The little black boy grew up and wrote a book about this Jewish family who had adopted him in 1907. In memory of this family, and until the end of his life, he wore a Star of David and said that in this family, he learned "how to live real life and determination."

You might recognize his name.

This little boy was: Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong. Louis Armstrong proudly spoke fluent Yiddish!

And "Satchmo" is Yiddish for "Big Cheeks."

Did you know any of this?



**MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TODAY**

*Donations to the Congregation are a meaningful way to congratulate friends on Simchas or to show that you care in times of sorrow.*

*Contributions may be designated to any of our funds (see below). If a specific fund is not designated, the money will go into our General Fund.*

*For a minimum contribution of \$10.00 a printed card is sent. An individually hand-calligraphed card will be sent for any contribution of \$18.00 or more.*

*The minimum contribution to the Endowment Trust Fund is \$10.00*

*To make contributions to ANY FUND, including the CHAI CAMPAIGN, please mail or call:*

*Mrs. Renee Kramer  
1102 Oak Hill Avenue  
Hagerstown, MD 21742  
(301) 733-2093*

General Fund, Endowment Fund, Cemetery Fund, Rabbi's Discretionary Fund, Young Adult Fund, Harold & Jeanne Jacobs Fund, Youth Group Fund, Sharon Wagshal Religious School Fund, 'Tree of Life', and the Adolph & Hannah Baer Trust Fund

**PLANT A TREE IN ISRAEL**



Planting a tree in Israel is the perfect way to show you care. You can plant trees for all occasions and help green the land of Israel while sending a special gift to a friend or loved one. For each order, a beautiful certificate of your choice is mailed to the recipient with your own personal message. Plant trees for all of these occasions: birth, Bar or Bat mitzvah, graduation, wedding, birthday, get-well wish or in memory of someone special. Over the past 100 years, JNF has planted over 250 million trees in the land of Israel. The cost per tree is \$18 with the check made out to Congregation B'nai Abraham. We have an EZTree account at JNF and Carrol will place the order for your tree(s).

For more information & to order a tree, contact Carrol Lourie at: (240) 818-7555 (cell phone) or email her at: [cglourie@gmail.com](mailto:cglourie@gmail.com)

Contact Rachel Nichols to learn how you can plan a self-sustaining gift to B'nai Abraham. (240) 308-1740 or [HRDNichols@centurylink.net](mailto:HRDNichols@centurylink.net)

**REGULAR OFFICE HOURS:** Monday, Tuesday, Friday 8:30am - 1:30pm

Michelle Jardine, Office Administrator Email: [bnaiabraham1@verizon.net](mailto:bnaiabraham1@verizon.net) Office phone: (301) 733-5039

**DIRECTORY - WHO TO CALL**

**CONTRIBUTIONS**

Renee Kramer (301) 733-2093  
[terrace708@myactv.net](mailto:terrace708@myactv.net)

**PULPIT FLOWERS / TREES**

Carrol Lourie (240) 818-7555  
[cglourie@gmail.com](mailto:cglourie@gmail.com)

**TREE OF LIFE**

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[falkeq@hotmail.com](mailto:falkeq@hotmail.com)

**Yahrzeit Plaques**

Ben Chlebnikow (301) 791-6590  
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**DOR L' DOR**

Joan Becker (301) 791-7175

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