



May 2015 Newsletter

CONGREGATION
B'NAI ABRAHAM

Volume 26, Issue 8

12 Iyar - 13 Sivan 5775

FROM THE DESK OF THE RABBI

We are now in a period of time called the Omer. This commandment derives from Leviticus 23:15-16 that reads, *“And you shall count unto you from the morrow after the day of rest, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the waving; seven weeks shall there be complete; even unto the morrow after the seventh week shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall present a new meal-offering unto the LORD.”* These forty-nine days are counted between Passover and Shavuot. During this time, we are invited to recite a special blessing that says: *“Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has commanded us to count the Omer.”*

Although we no longer bring an “omer” — “a sheaf of a harvested crop” — to the Temple as our People did in ancient days, we may still invite ourselves to connect with this period of our sacred calendar.

On Passover, we are given freedom. This freedom speaks volumes to our heritage of Reform Judaism that places central our autonomous free will. In essence, it is our “freedom to choose.” We teach that people should be more concerned with how we treat one another, while still finding meaningfulness in our sacred inheritance. Though each is of equal import, we now place somewhat less emphasis on *antiquated* ancestral notions of ritual than have prior generations.

This orientation may seem natural in America where we let our freedom ‘ring’. But there’s a downside to our freedom. We have the freedom to “opt-out” from our Jewish learning and traditions.

In the modern world, we are losing touch with our Jewish roots. Generations before ours had deep investment and connection with those who knew more of our tradition. Today, that immediate connection is virtually gone from a world which previously overflowed with a reverence for our wisdom and faith. What is scary is that our “opting out” is now occurring concurrent with a rise of anti-Semitism throughout the world.

So what might the omer mean to us? In this period between the holiday of Passover, our “freedom”, and Shavuot, our “receiving of Torah”, let’s double-down on what we need to do as a community to thrive into the future. Let us figure out how to use our freedom wisely toward building a lasting love and learning of our faith for generations to come.

Rabbi Plost

CONTENTS

<i>Rabbi’s Message</i>	1
<i>President’s Message</i>	2
<i>Miracle Workers</i>	3
<i>Buildings & Grounds</i>	3
<i>Onegs</i>	3
<i>Food Festival</i>	3
<i>Grand Gala</i>	4
<i>Yom Ha’Shoah</i>	5
<i>Yahrzeits</i>	6
<i>Donations</i>	7
<i>Dates to Remember</i>	7
<i>Lifelong Learning</i>	7
<i>Passover Collage</i>	8
<i>Religious School</i>	8
<i>Religious Practices</i>	8
<i>How to Donate</i>	9
<i>Directory</i>	9

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A congregant recently exclaimed, "We have too much going on!" To that I said, "Thank God!"

A congregation with a calendar full of events is a healthy congregation. Just this month we enjoyed baby namings, a joyful community Seder, our solemn *Yom HaShoah* Shabbat commemoration, celebration of a Bat Mitzvah, and a successful fundraiser. That is all interwoven with Torah study, weekly shabbat services, religious school, Life-long Learning sessions, group conversion classes, choir rehearsals and Temple leadership meetings. Whew and wow!

And that doesn't begin to take into account the vast number of tasks that are undertaken by congregants alone, or in twos and threes, that keep B'nai Abraham humming. This shows our Jewish community in its many facets – religious life, education and social.

Do you realize how incredibly blessed we are to have these moments? Each one of us has the opportunity to interact with our learned and energetic rabbi and with each other as we go about our sacred mission.

Often, after the Torah reading, we sing: "*Al sh'losha d'varim ha-olam o-meid. Al ha-Torah, v'al ha-avodah, v'al g'milut chasadim.*" From the *Pirkei Avot*, the Ethics of Our Fathers, it translates to: The World stands upon three things: On Torah, prayer and deeds of loving-kindness. Exactly what is reflected in the litany above.

The best part of all is that we have so many opportunities to live these very words. There is nothing that compares to the satisfaction of knowing you're an active partner in the health of your community. No act is too small to make a difference. If by simply attending a service you help create the necessary *minyan* that allows a mourner to recite the *Kaddish*, your involvement has mattered.

A list of those who made the events of the past month possible represents close to a third of our member families and friends, and we've attempted to name them all elsewhere in this Newsletter.

In some way, shape or form each member of CBA has gifts to contribute. Know that each one is appreciated and valued. None of us has to stand alone. Please stay involved, my friends.

Shalom,

Rachel

RECYCLING PROGRAM

Note: CBA is trying to be a good steward of the Earth and, as such, we will now be recycling our trash. A bin has been placed in the kitchen for co-mingled paper, plastic and metal refuse. We will also place one in the Religious school.

Carole



MIRACLE WORKERS OF THE MONTH

This month's honors go to none other than Jerry Falke and Vic Kronstadt. They have donated their time and expertise to install LED floodlights in the courtyard and rebuilt the fluorescent rear alley light fixture and converted it to LED. They also worked on the fire escape lights and social hall floodlight. All of this was done to enhance security.

In addition, the Miracle Worker of the Month recognition is shared with Pete Sherman who, on a moments notice put together the supplies and extraordinary technical team and reinstalled our beautiful Tree of Life in the social hall last week.

Leaves on the Tree of Life, designed by renowned sculptor Sanford Werfel, are the perfect way to honor family and friend's simchas and the memorial stones beneath the Tree epitomize the ideal memorial to loved ones. The Tree of Life was donated by Gayl & Arthur Weiss more than thirty years ago and Arthur's recent passing is a significant loss to the entire Congregation, family and friends.

Ben Chlebnikow, Building & Grounds Chairman

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

Our buildings are being made increasingly more secure. All entry locks have been rekeyed and a limited number of keys have been distributed only to those with frequent access need. The security alarms are now always active in both buildings. The rear social hall door is no longer left open on shabbat afternoons for oneg deliveries. For entry to the buildings, when needed, please call Donald Wingfield.

Doug Lieberman, Chief of Security

ONEGS - May Schedule

Friday	May	1	Laura and Mike Wilson, Chairs; Jennifer & Michael Weiss
Friday	May	8	Carrol & Ira Lourie, Chairs; Jackie & Alex Betke, Brigie & Dick Greenwald, Lauren & Richard Kramer, Nyna & Abe Lachman
Friday	May	15	Edith & Bruce Edwards, Chairs; Amelia & Steve Kasinof
Friday	May	22	Leah & Tom Neveil, Chairs; Kam & Steve Feld
Friday	May	29	Shavuot/Confirmation - Families of the Confirmands

FOOD FESTIVAL '15

Yes Congregants! We are having a Food Festival in the Spring! May 3rd, from 11:00 AM — 4:00 PM.

This year we are planning to expand our menu and use our courtyard and parking lot under a large tent! And, as in the past, we will need everyone's help....cooks, bakers, servers, and more! A big thanks in advance to Richard Weiss who will be donating all the paper goods — and kudos to Laura Wilson for handling publicity.

Please contact Carole Lafferman (claffitz@aol.com) or Dan Schiffman (dan.schiffman@nmfn.com) for details.

THE GRAND GALA 2015



The Grand Gala event, an auction fund-raiser for Congregation B'nai Abraham, was held at The Grand Building, 20 W. Washington St., Hagerstown from 4–8 p.m. on Sunday, April 12th. The purpose of the event was to raise funds for the future needs of the synagogue, and the theme of *The Grand Gala* was to provide “A Gift for our Children and the Generations to Come...” More than \$32,000 was raised from this community event.

Did you know?

- The delicious food, beverages and many live and silent auctions items were donated by CBA's Emral Shaool family and through arrangements they made with the Mango Grill and Benny's Pub.

- Sponsor and CBA member Mike Fitzgerald donated The Grand Ballroom as the event venue.
- More than 17 congregants volunteered service on the committee or the day of the event with set-up, reservations, payment, clean-up, and more.
- Employees of Washco Development, Inc. helped with table set-up, moving auction items, clean-up and returning tables the next day to the Homewood Retirement center.
- Rabbi Plost's bid number was #65, and the carpet he had the winning bid on coincidentally was labeled #65...
- Ira Lourie was the event volunteer photographer.
- Carl Disque and his band not only performed jazz, but also stayed the entire event and provided us with sound system access
- There were 123 paid reservations; more than 106 congregation members and their friends attended.
- Out of 120 silent auction items, all but 22 items sold.
- All 21 live auction items were sold. Auctioneer Tim Gordon did a wonderful job raising more than \$8,600



- 32 event sponsors donated \$9,600 to the Gala.
- 32 advertisers donated \$4,790 in advertising
- Over 310 raffle tickets were sold prior to the event and many more at the event
- Event expenses are estimated to be about \$1,600, about 5% (or less) of event revenues.

The list could go on. There were so many ways each of you contributed to the success of the event. On behalf of event Chairperson Mansoor Shaool who is currently in California, the Gala Committee, and the event volunteers, thank you to everyone for your support of *The Grand Gala*.

Buck Macht, Co-Chairperson

YOM HA'SHOAH MEMORIAL SERVICE

On April 27, B'nai Abraham and the Washington County community observed Yom Ha'Shoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day). Jessica Fitzwater played a violin selection from Schindler's list and the choir sang selections from the Holocaust Cantata accompanied by Lucas Hanson on the cello. The music was wonderful and truly moving.

Our speaker was Dr. Avi Nic who was seven years old when the Nazis attacked the Jews of Hungary. He told his story of survival and determination to get an education, even while enduring the hardships of Nazi imprisonment and torture.

In 1950 his family was able to emigrate to Israel to begin anew. His lifelong ambition was to become a physician though he had little formal education. Ultimately, he was able to pass the entry exams and with diligence and self-discipline became an orthopedic surgeon. The evening was inspiring on many levels.



YahrzeitsMay 1, 2015

* Harry Cooper
 * Benjamin Schindler
 * Helen S. Dodson
 Daisy Lahn
 Lillian Lieberman
 Phyllis Littman Van Camp
 Camille Markley
 * Lillian M. Roth
 Moses Garonzik
 Mollie S. Mansh
 Peter Schiro
 Henrietta Jonas
 Fred May

May 22, 2015

Benjamin H. Snyder
 David Ginsberg
 * Laura Brown Chaplin Abrahams
 * Harry Schindler
 Irean Weidhorn
 Phillip Greenberg
 Morris Greenwald
 Lawrence Horovitz
 Hilda Powopsky
 Shirley Lee Abel
 * Samuel Salitsky
 Evelyn Plost Hollander
 Arthur Greenwald
 Stanley Macht, MD
 * Bessie Eller
 * Marvin C. Gerber
 Dr. Hyman Henry

May 8, 2015

Flossy Dirolf
 Amelia Fleisher
 Ginny Franke
 Alexander Heisler
 * Bonnie Amalfitano
 Bernard Hammerman
 * Samuel J. Cohen
 * Marie Portugais Uzan
 Sunny England

May 29, 2015

Wallace Baer
 Jay Newman Macht
 * Maxwell Greenwald
 Steven B'Sedek
 Rose Marks
 * Vance Allen Snook
 Dorothy Rosen
 Genevieve Saltzman
 Isadore Schwartz
 Mary Shestack
 * Rose Weiss
 Rose Sanzel
 * Milton Chlebnikow
 Michael Benjamin
 Mildred Feiner
 * Haya Sarah Moch
 * Abraham Rosenberg
 * Mollie Schindler
 Mary Cohen
 Lena Leitz

May 15, 2015

Ira Brewster Terry
 Harry Wartzman
 Ann Muyderman
 * Louis Seigel
 * Rosalind G. Sherman
 Sayde G. Gruner
 * Peter E. Goodman
 Robert Emmert
 * Benjamin Kasinof
 Dora Amkraut
 Morris Kerstein
 * Ida Werner
 * Ida Mae Cohen Chlebnikow
 Esther Cohen

* Denotes
 Yahrzeit Plaque
 in Sanctuary



DONATIONS

Endowment Fund

In honor of Robert Kerstein's 75th birthday by Hannah & Ed Baer
 In honor of Robert Kerstein's 75th birthday by Sydell Thrope
 In memory of Ret. Col. USAF Richard Numbers by Scott Numbers' friends at DOE

General Fund

In honor of Robert Kerstein's 75th Birthday by Gilbert Berman
 In memory of Beth Armel by Betty & Alvin Snyder
 In memory of Beth Armel by Neil, Joan, Ava & Leah Mendelsohn
 In memory of Beth Armel by Donna Johnston
 In memory of Beth Armel by Linda Miles
 In memory of Beth Armel by Carol & Jake Gruver
 In memory of Beth Armel by Ronald & Cathy Keyser

Chai Fund

In honor of Sharon Wagshal for her kindness & thoughtfulness
 by Frida & Arthur Ksienski

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In memory of Steve Baran by Janet & Mansoor Emral Shaool

Jeanne Jacobs Senior Fund

Honoring Passover by Fred & Christine Edell
 In honor of my son, Steve's admission to the Wharton Ph.D. program
 by Barbara Schwab

Chai/Endowment Fund

In honor of Bob Kerstein's 75th birthday by Lieba & Gerald Cohen
 In memory of Ret. Col. USAF Richard Numbers by Lieba & Gerald Cohen
 In memory Charles "Maish" Lafferman by Lieba & Gerald Cohen
 In memory of Beth Armel by Randi & Scott Numbers
 In memory of Ret. Col. USAF Richard Numbers by Sharon Wagshal

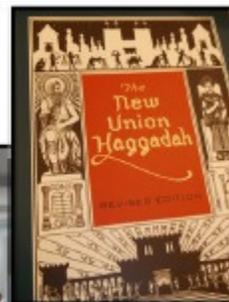
DATES TO REMEMBER

Sunday	May	3	Jewish Food Festival	11:00am — 4:00pm
Sunday	May	17	Brunch	10:00am
Thursday	May	21	Books & Dessert	7:00pm

LIFELONG LEARNING

Sunday	May 17	Brunch	Speaker: Josh Furman	<i>Jewish Parenting after WWII</i>	10:00am
Thursday	May 21	Books & Dessert	<i>Suddenly Love</i> by A. Applefeld	@ the Kramer's	7:00pm

Pesach 2015



NOTES FROM THE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

For those of you who missed our annual community seder, the religious school students who attended introduced reading the New Union Haggadah with a beautiful rendition of the traditional recitation of the steps of the seder (literally, the order). We had a wonderful turn-out of youngsters and distributed a couple of dozen prizes for finding the afikomen. (Disclaimer: No youngster left empty-handed!)

Now, we are proceeding through the wilderness to Mount Sinai and trying to learn WHY G-d blessed the Israelites with freedom. We are learning the responsibilities that accompany our release from slavery and are answering the question, "Do I really need to be good if no one is watching?" Our older students even wrote haikus about an individual's relationship with Divinity.

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

We have bought new Haggadahs for our Passover Seder. The old Haggadahs are available for anyone who would like them for a donation to the Temple. Contact Randi Numbers Randi@thenumbersplace.net or (301) 293-2636.

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, Jeanne Jacob's Senior Fund, Youth Group Fund, Sharon Wagshal Religious School Fund, 'Tree of Life',

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 cglourie@gmail.com

Have you remembered Congregation B'nai Abraham in your estate planning? Visit our website @ <http://bnaiaabraham.net/> for updated info & changes

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

Michelle Jardine, Office Administrator Email: bnaiaabraham1@verizon.net Office phone: (301) 733-5039

DIRECTORY - WHO TO CALL

CONTRIBUTIONS

Renee Kramer (301) 733-2093
terrace708@myactv.net

PULPIT FLOWERS / TREES

Carrol Lourie (240) 818-7555
cglourie@gmail.com

TREE OF LIFE

Jerry Falke (301) 739-8456
falkeq@hotmail.com

Yahrzeit Plaques

Ben Chlebnikow (301) 791-6590
bchleb77@aol.com

DOR L' DOR

Joan Becker (301) 791-7175

HOSPITALIZED MEMBERS

Rabbi Plost (301) 733-5039
ariplost@gmail.com

CONGREGATION B'NAI ABRAHAM

49 E. Baltimore Street
Hagerstown, MD 21740

Ari Plost, Rabbi

Rachel B.K. Nichols, President
email: hrdnichols@centurylink.net