



November 2015 Newsletter

CONGREGATION
B'NAI ABRAHAM

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FROM THE DESK OF THE RABBI

Dear Friends,

We, the Jewish people, are reminded in our texts, our liturgy and by our experience, that we are to be a "holy people." To be "holy" - in Hebrew, "kadesh," connotes an idea of separateness or as Rabbi Jack Bloom has described, a "set-apart people." This is not meant in a negative construction, but a positive one. Of course, we similarly fully embrace those non-Jews who are our spouses, as they are members of our Jewish family too.

To be holy is to not to degrade or marginalize other groups, as "lesser." It is, instead, to encourage and to teach, that to be separate can be a source of pride - if undertaken with sensitivity, tolerance and acceptance of the value of other groups as well.

As Reform Jews, we embrace the notion of universal and humanitarian values, but not to the diminishment of a particularism that ignores our responsibility to each other as members of a Jewish family. This is to say that we are in our humanity and our religiosity like "other peoples," but at the same time, also, "unlike other peoples."

Being a rabbi is to carry in one's own identity an essence of "kadesh." In fact, the term *clergy* in Judaism translates exactly as "klei Kodesh," a vessel of holiness. Rabbis exist in an in-between space, not altogether different than the dualism of what it means to be a member of a "holy people," for each and every Jew. As Rabbis, however, to be "klei Kodesh," is to experience this understanding in oneself on a heightened level.

I bring all this up because the wedding celebration - and everything leading up to it - was a public display of the intersection of the vertical (above and beyond) and horizontal (just like us). Your rabbi, in a way, for a moment, became somewhat closer to being a congregant. Not that we would forget that this was still the marriage of a rabbi, with the whole congregation invited and present. Additionally, in a complete inversion of the symbolic role, Michelle actually assumed a semi-clerical role, becoming a rebbetzin. Growing up in a more classical reform tradition, Michelle upon first hearing the term actually offered back to me, "A Rabbitism."

What is so beautiful about this whole affair is that we have all become closer to one another, sharing together in the true meaning of a congregational family. From our hearts to yours, we are forever grateful. My most meaningful moment in our sanctuary will always be when I stood underneath our chuppah. I am so overwhelmingly happy that your lives and our lives are now intertwined in the special occasions that we experience in sacred community.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

My drive home from Hagerstown is just the right length. It's enough time to transition from one task to another, to begin to wind down for the day, or to have a conversation on the phone — hands free, of course. There's one part of the trip, a couple of miles from Mercersburg, where if the timing is right, I'm gifted with a sunset. The beauty never fails to stun me and puts everything else out of my mind. I've even been known to stop on the side of the road just to watch. No two sunsets are alike and I feel at peace and very connected to our Creator. And I am grateful.

How convenient then, that our theme for the month of November is gratitude.

Today, a segment on NPR was about being happy. The presenter, David Steindl-Rast, was linking gratitude to happiness. He is a Benedictine monk, one of the first Catholics to open Buddhist-Christian dialogue. He said we feel gratefulness when we are given something that has value; and I would add, with nothing being asked or expected in return. Each minute holds an opportunity to be grateful, whether it's for what we have or for a misfortune we are not experiencing. In the end, his belief is that stringing all those little moments of gratitude together creates a state of happiness.

So, it's all about where you focus your attention, which can be harder than you think. But we have help. Just look at the language of our prayers; they're full of thankfulness for all kinds of things, from simply awaking in the morning to enjoying the fruit of the vine.

This taking account of our blessings is sort of addictive. Once you start thinking of it, one thing leads to another, until you're dripping with appreciation. Aren't we fortunate that belonging to Congregation B'nai Abraham hands us so many opportunities to be grateful, all within a Jewish framework. I can start a list easily: for the opportunity to worship with friends, for an inspiring rabbi, for a growing religious education program, for great food at potluck dinners, for the enjoyment of music. This could go on for pages, but our editor, Jerry Falke, would most certainly hold me to a reasonable length.

What I most appreciate as President is all the volunteer work undertaken by our congregants. So much of what happens here is driven by volunteers acting alone, in committees or in leadership.

You can claim a piece of that action. I hope you are receiving much from being here at CBA. Belonging, in my opinion, is best appreciated when it is a two-way path. Happily, there are endless ways to accomplish this and volunteering is one of them. By volunteering your time and talent you will be given something of value; you'll gain a sense of accomplishment and even though you don't ask for it, gratitude. It doesn't matter if you give eighteen minutes or eighteen hours, because everyone's efforts count.

It is my hope that you all will find your sweet spot or spots in temple life, and that you'll find much for which to be grateful.

Shalom,
Rachel

On a note of delayed gratitude -- in my recognition last month of the families who have made it possible for our entire set of new High Holy Day prayer books to be dedicated to the memory of Judy Greenwald, I inadvertently missed one family for which I am most sorry. Thank you to Gary, Sheryl and Erica Greenwald for being part of this touching tribute.

David Steindl-Rast's presentation can be found here:
<http://www.npr.org/2014/02/14/267202113/what-does-it-take-to-be-grateful>

NOTES FROM THE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

We are pleased and grateful to announce we no longer have exposed fluorescent tubing in the school hallway and classrooms! Many thanks to — in alphabetical order — David Hanan, Scott Numbers, Monda Sagalkin and Leon Seidman for donating their Sunday morning, October 18, to improve the learning environment of our school by installing diffuser covers over the existing lights. It was a tedious job, so kudos to you for all your hard work!

Thank you to Janet and Manny Emral Shaool for their donation of electric candles for our future candlelight services.

DONATIONS**Endowment Fund**

In honor of the marriage of Michelle Rosenbluth & Rabbi Ari Plost

by Gayl Weiss

In memory of Scott Numbers' father on his burial

by Marcia & George Miller

at Arlington National Cemetery

In honor of the marriage of Rabbi Ari & Michelle Plost

by Sydell Thrope

General Fund

In memory of Dr. Eric Smith & Susan Smith

by Sandi Gagliardi

In honor of the marriage of Michelle Rosenbluth & Rabbi Ari Plost

by Julie Ferron

In honor of the marriage of Michelle Rosenbluth & Rabbi Ari Plost

by Monda & Sandy Sagalkin

In honor of the marriage of Michelle Rosenbluth & Rabbi Ari Plost

by Marcia & George Miller

In honor of the marriage of Lisa & Dan Schiffman

by Marcia & George Miller

For his father's Yahrzeit, Louis J. Wineburg

by Arthur Wineburg

Chai/Endowment Fund

A Deuteronomy-*D'varim* level plaque in honor of our parents receiving the 2014 Boneh Award

by Sasha & Romyar Nourafchan

Sarah & Shervan Rashti

Sassan & Jessica Shaool

Adam Shaool

A Mazel Tov on Michelle Rosenbluth & Rabbi Ari Plost's marriage

by Lieba & Gerald Cohen

In memory of Odell H. Rosen

by Lieba & Gerald Cohen

An Exodus-*Shemot*-level plaque in honor of the marriage of Ari & Michelle

by Charles & Cecile Plost

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In honor of the Rabbi's wedding

by Arthur Wineburg

In celebration of Michelle Rosenbluth's shower

by Barbara Schwab

In celebration of Michelle & Ari Plost's wedding

by Barbara Schwab

In honor of Michelle & Ari Plost's wedding

by Rachel Nichols &

Pearl Kruger

ONEGS - NOVEMBER SCHEDULE

Friday November 6 Robin & David Handler, Chairs; Barby & Bob Weiss

Friday November 13 Sybil Schiffman, Chair; Jackie & Alex Betke, Renee & Fred Kramer

Friday November 20 Marcia & George Miller, Chairs; Robin & Bill Hollin

Friday November 27 Thanksgiving Weekend, Oneg to be provided

CHAI FINANCE

The final numbers are in, the Chai Campaign gets an **A**, and comes to a close!

There are lots of accomplishments to feel proud of, and many of them you already know about (new restrooms, new front entryway, accessible rear entrance to the Social Hall, new furnaces, roofs, and A/C units, new web design and implementation, Sunday School renovations, Baer Room renovations, etc) so I will not go into them again here. Our *new* accomplishments include:

- Our final pledge total is \$522,208, which is 93% of our original goal of \$560,000 (hence the final grade of "A"). Actual funds collected to date total \$440,698. Chai is not accepting any more new donations, although money will continue to be collected as the later pledges are fulfilled.
- Our lift is on order (!), and we will soon complete the long-awaited goal of handicapped access to our sanctuary!
- We successfully completed the \$50,000 challenge grant from Evan & Judy Novenstein this month.
- Most thrillingly, we received a new pledge from the Novensteins that fulfills the Chai Campaign requirement for naming the sanctuary. Evan and Judy have asked that the sanctuary be named for Evan's parents who were longtime and beloved members of our congregation. Stay tuned for more details about the naming.

I am so-o-o-o happy and proud to be able to draw the Chai Campaign to a close. The Campaign officially opened May 15, 2008 with much determination and hard work on the part of many people to make it a success. Kudos to the original committee members: Ed Baer, Lieba Cohen, Dan Greenwald, Liz Krell, Doug Lieberman, Marcia Miller, Al Schiff, Allan Seidman, and Sharon Wagshal, and honorary Campaign Co-Chairs Dick Greenwald and Bob Kerstein, and to our counsel, Roger Schlossberg. Now, almost seven and a half years later, we are declaring the Campaign to be completed. The final step underway is to design our donor plaques.

Collecting the money was only part of the effort however. Lots of people helped spend it, from our new website (thank you, Rabbi Ari) to our new logo (thank you, posthumously, to Beth Armel) to our much improved physical plant.

Very, very special thanks for our physical plant changes must be given to Ben Chlebnikow and his band of magicians, a changing cast over the years. If I am missing some names here, please let me know whom I have missed. Thanks to Ben, Jerry Falke and Vic Kronstadt for staying the course on the elevator/lift, and to Ben, Jerry, Vic, Steve Feld, Pete Sherman, Scott Numbers, Mike Armel and all who made all the many repairs, upgrades and renovations happen. I don't know if it takes a whole village to maintain a temple, but our temple has greatly benefited from the time, effort and expertise that these folks have donated towards keeping it in working order.

Finally, and probably most importantly, thanks to the donors!! You all made it happen. So pat yourselves on the back — you allowed Congregation B'nai Abraham to continue to serve our vibrant and successful Jewish community.

And now, on to the next challenge!

(For additional info on the Campaign, contact me, Liz Krell.)

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

The Religious Practices Committee will be meeting this coming month to review the High Holidays and to discuss what, if any changes, we want to make for next year. We know there will be some required changes next year since we will be using our new High Holiday prayer book.

If you have any comments about this year's High Holidays, or if you want to join the Committee, please call Monda Sagalkin 240-291-6983 or email her at monsansagalkin@aol.com

Yahrzeits

November 6, 2015

- * Judy Blumenthal
- Sam Eller
- Sadie Hertz
- * Aaron Samuel Ruben
- Leah Horovitz
- Effron Levin
- Leo Fernheimer
- Karl Rusch
- * Joe Cooper
- Kantor Seymour
- Bernice Weiner
- Roselle Bennett
- Billy Cunningham
- * Louis Y. Lyon
- Etta Newman

November 13, 2015

- Harry N. Knecht
- Harry Leibowitz
- * Marjorie Gordon
- David Nathanson
- * Abraham Chlebnikow
- * Samuel Lyons
- * David Lyons
- * Lt. Teddy R. Myers
- Frederick A. Bennett
- * Hyman Shapiro
- * Barney Goldstein
- Jennie Macht

* Denotes
Yahrzeit Plaque
in Sanctuary

November 20, 2015

- * Aaron Simon
- Harold Hymans
- Thelma Gordon
- Mark Freed
- Samuel Sagel
- Albert Weidhorn
- * Phyllis Handler
- * Leon Sanzel
- Sarah Stern
- Katherine Sirni
- * Thelma Coran
- * Beatrice B. Rosenthal
- * Jack Greenwald

November 27, 2015

- * Erna Baer
- * Moses Berkson
- * Esther Kaplan
- * Sarah Weiner
- Audrey Feldman
- Dr. Sidney Novenstein
- Dinah Prussick
- * Lizzie Saltzman
- Harold Jacobs
- George Sharpe
- * Dr. Norman Thrope
- * Bertha L. Mendelsohn
- Leon B. Lyon
- * Dora Fribush
- Herman Silverfield
- Leonard Feldman

LIFELONG LEARNING

Sunday November 15 Books & Bagels, 1:30pm The book is: *A BRIDE FOR ONE NIGHT*
 Saturday November 21 Movie Night, 7:30pm in the Baer Room. The movie is: *SHANGHAI GHETTO*

DATES TO REMEMBER



Sunday	November 8	Veteran's Day Cemetery Service	11:30 am
Friday	November 13	Congregational Dinner	6:15 pm
Sunday	November 15	Books & Bagels	1:30 pm
Saturday	November 21	Movie Night	7:30 pm

At a time when law enforcement officers and military are being publicly derided, let's show our support for those who risk their lives daily that we may enjoy the freedoms that make America great. Attend the Veterans Day service, Sunday November 8th at 11:30 am at the CBA Cemetery.

CALENDARS

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

CARING COMMITTEE

The Caring Committee shall provide care, companionship and assistance to those members of our Congregation and their immediate families in need, due to their health, age or non-financial crisis or catastrophe.

There are 11 Committee members with designated points of contact as described below. If anyone is interested in supporting the Committee, please contact Sharon Metzner.

Sharon Metzner, chairperson:

Sharon will receive the first call from the rabbi in case of an illness or Shiva call.

sharonmetz@aol.com

[\(301\) 739-2972](tel:(301)739-2972)

Robbie Greenberg:

Congregation members can call or be called by Robbie to organize meals, as needed, following illness, surgery or family emergency.

robbieg56@gmail.com

[\(301\) 797-7265](tel:(301)797-7265)

Barby Weiss:

Barby will be the person to contact if transportation is needed to Doctors appointments.

barby@myactv.net

[\(301\) 791-6098](tel:(301)791-6098)

Sharon Wagshal:

Sharon can be contacted/or will contact members to schedule home visits or social outings.

sharwag@aol.com

[\(301\) 797-3220](tel:(301)797-3220)

HARC ANNUAL BOOK DRIVE

With 63 organizations, including 18 houses of worship, collecting books for this year's HARC/United Way/ Rotary Club/Early Childhood Advisory Council/FedEx drive, 17,400 books were collected! They are distributed in Washington County to at-risk children, used to replenish the Little Free Libraries, and to regularly replenish stores of pediatricians' books for the Reach Out And Read early childhood literacy program.

Thank you to our congregants for contributing about 300 books and thank you to Carole Lafferman for being the hero of this project

SIMCHAT TORAH CELEBRATION

On Simchat Torah we "Rejoice with the Torah" to celebrate the conclusion of the annual cycle of Torah readings and to mark the beginning of a new cycle. Everyone was able to see the Torah in its entirety as it was unrolled around the sanctuary. The sight of the entire five books of Moses is awe-inspiring, and seeing how certain sections are illustrated using creatively calligraphed lettering & meticulous spacing of phrases clearly demonstrates that the parchment is a sofer's hand-scribed 'original' graphic masterpiece.



Photos courtesy of Buck Macht



PHOTOGRAPHY POLICY REVIEW

Photography in the sanctuary during services is prohibited. From time to time, permission may be given by the rabbi. Ask before acting.

Photographing from the choir loft is permissible provided no flash is used and the camera mechanism is not so loud as to disturb the sanctity of worship.



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', 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 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

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

Michelle Jardine, Office Administrator Email: bnaiabraham1@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
falkeg@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

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