



December 2016 Newsletter

CONGREGATION
B'NAI ABRAHAM

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1 Kislev - 2 Tevet 5777

FROM THE DESK OF THE RABBI

This past election showcased the deep divisiveness within our country. Many are appropriately anxious due to certain hateful rhetoric and radicalism. Our fellow congregants and neighbors have very real fears.

One of my rabbinical mentors, Gary Zola, teaches that Abraham Lincoln was fondly referred to by many Jews of his time as "Rabbi Abraham". Perhaps, at this time, it is worth remembering the wise words of Rabbi Abraham declared in his *Gettysburg Address*,

"It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain -- that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom -- and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

So many of OUR forebearers sacrificed so that WE might enjoy the exceptional opportunities to freely practice our faith in our beloved country. We have a responsibility, far beyond ourselves, to our forebearers and our children, to strengthen our relationships with one another. The tapestry of America is built one relationship, one organization and one community at a time.

Rather than fearing someone different from ourselves, we must not withdraw in isolation. Only an authentic sense of connection with one another will overcome the forces that seek an ungodly agenda.

We too can seek a new resolve to forge ahead with a reborn effort, forged in the fire cast of an awakened consciousness that the protection of our deepest values requires our continued vigilance to love one another.

Every encounter is an opportunity.

Rabbi Ari Plost

CONTENTS

<i>Rabbi's Message</i>	1
<i>President's Message</i>	2
<i>Legacy Circle</i>	3
<i>Religious School</i>	3
<i>Dates to Remember</i>	3
<i>Onegs</i>	3
<i>Quote of the Month</i>	3
<i>Yahrzeits</i>	4
<i>Lifelong Learning</i>	4
<i>Caring Committee</i>	4
<i>AED Units Needed</i>	5
<i>Recent Donations</i>	5
<i>What A Day It Was</i>	5
<i>Sinatra & the Jews</i>	6
<i>How to Donate</i>	7
<i>Directory</i>	7

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Jewish values are important to all of us. They are so ingrained in us we often do not realize that the larger society does not share them.

The importance of caring for the stranger, because we were strangers in Egypt, is one of those core Jewish values. Since we are an immigrant country, we may have taken for granted that the rest of this country shared this value. We have now learned that we may have been mistaken and that this value is not universally shared.

Thomas Kennedy, a Presbyterian Hagerstown resident of the 19 century, demonstrated to us how fighting for that belief could change our State. As you know, though he suffered much abuse, he fought until he finally obtained passage of the "Jew Bill".

Now we have a chance through the Thomas Kennedy Center to honor his legacy. I hope the Thomas Kennedy Center will teach respect and embrace the inclusion of all people regardless of differences in race, religious faith, ethnicity, educational level and economic status.

We will begin by inviting the NAACP to use a room in our education building for their activities. I hope you will join me in welcoming them.

Monda

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We need volunteers to help with the House of Worship Tour on December 26 for the 5-7 pm shift. We also need a volunteer to help handicapped people

If you can volunteer, please call or email Monda 240-291-6983 or monsansagalkin@aol.com

VETERANS DAY FLOWERS

The beautiful flowers on our bema November 11, 2016 were donated by Randi and Scott Numbers in memory of his father Colonel Richard Numbers.

TIKUN OLAM

Volunteers Needed

- Volunteers are needed for Red Cross Gift wrapping at Valley Mall Sunday, December 18th 3:00-6:00 pm shift. Please contact Carole Lafferman (240) 217-4496 or at claffitz@aol.com
- Volunteers needed to greet and register guests at REACH's homeless shelter on Monday, January 9. 6:30- 10:00 pm Please contact Carole Lafferman (240) 217-4496/claffitz@aol.com

DIRECTORIES

There are Directories in the office if you need one. Please stop by and pick one up. Michelle will be there Monday, Tuesday, and Friday 8:30 am - 1:30 pm.



LEGACY CIRCLE

Imagine securing your financial future while simultaneously supporting a cause you're passionate about. That's exactly what you'll do when you invest in a Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA) with Congregation B'nai Abraham.

A charitable-gift annuity is one of the easiest and most popular ways to invest in retirement, providing you with a high fixed-rate lifetime income and possible tax benefits.

Please contact your insurance agent. We need your help and assistance to support future generations of Congregation B'nai Abraham.

Thank you.

GREETINGS FROM THE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Last month we enjoyed our first family activity event of 5777. Rabbi Plost led our students in practicing the morning blessing "Modeh Ani" thanking Adonai for granting us another day of opportunities to learn and grow. Each student expressed gratitude for their personal blessings such as family, friends, food, pets and clean air to breathe. Rabbi read "Divine Sparks" by Howard Schwartz, the story of how Adonai spread 'sparks of goodness' throughout the world during Creation. Every good deed we do helps to fulfill our goal of 'making the world a better place'.

Of course we also enjoyed grape juice and challah and practiced the blessings for those special foods.

Finally, everyone made and decorated clay bowls to remind us to collect the 'Divine sparks' we find all around us!

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sunday	December	4	Brunch	10:00 AM
Wednesday	December	14	Executive Meeting	7:30 PM
Sunday	December	18	Books & Bagels	1:30 PM
Wednesday	December	21	Board of Trustees Meeting	7:30 PM
Friday	December	23	Hanukkah Party	6:15 PM

ONEGS - DECEMBER SCHEDULE

Friday	December	2	Sheryl & Gary Greenwald, Chairs; Mike Armel
Friday	December	9	Joan & Doug Becker, Chairs; Laura & Mike Wilson
Friday	December	16	Fern & Joe Cunningham, Chair; Sandra & Raymond Feliciano
Friday	December	23	Hanukkah Celebration

QUOTE OF THE MONTH: *"We owe a responsibility not only to those who are in Israel, but also to those generations that are no more — to those millions who have died within our lifetime — to Jews all over the world and to generations of Jews to come. We hate war. We do not rejoice in victories. We rejoice when a new kind of cotton is grown, and when strawberries bloom in Israel."*

Golda Meir



Yahrzeits**December 2, 2016**

* Dora Fribush
 Herman Silverman
 Leonard Feldman
 * Esther B. Lyon
 Roland Ducoffe
 Saul Schiffman
 * Harold A. Kopp
 Rachel Lachman

December 9, 2016

* Kathryn Brener
 Suzanne Barancik
 Menachem Kirszenberg
 Martha Fernheimer
 Simon Lasarow
 * Abraham Pashen
 Edna Weiner
 * Stanley Barbarnell
 Julius Fallas
 Pearl Margolis
 Judy Greenwald
 Emanuel Lebowitz
 Gertrude Schiff

December 16, 2016

Dr. Samuel Newman
 Ethel Lasarow
 * Rose Weiss
 David Samel
 Lena May
 Samuel Sagel
 * Benjamin Berkson
 Herman Honig
 * Jennie S. Rosen
 * Shirley Chlebnikow
 Ida Garonzik
 * Esther R. Lyon

December 23, 2016

Lynn Markoff
 Joseph Goldblatt
 Betty Bennett
 * Celia Pearl Smith
 Clarence Brull
 Benjamin Forman
 Adolph Stein
 Albert Fleisher
 Jennie Menaged
 Ann Phelps
 Curt Schwab
 * Eric Wagshal
 * Rae Weiss
 * Josephine Auerbach
 Eugene Kreiselman

* Denotes
 Yahrzeit Plaque
 in Sanctuary

LIFELONG LEARNING

BRUNCH

December 4

10:00 AM

Social Hall

The theme of the brunch is **ETHIOPIAN JEWS**

We will be welcoming Barbara Jordan, Founder and Executive Director of the North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry. She has given her life to the project of saving the lives of Ethiopian Jews in Ethiopia while at the same time organizing Aliyot to Israel and developing programs to help them integrate and thrive in their new homes.



BOOKS & BAGELS

December 18

1:30 PM

Place: TBA

The book is *UNCOVERED* by Leah Lax.

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 (301) 739-2972
 Robbie Greenberg - for meals, as needed: robbieg56@gmail.com (301) 797-7265
 Barby Weiss - for transportation needs: barby@myactv.net (301) 791-6098
 Sharon Wagshal - for home visits or outings: sharwag@aol.com (301) 797-3220



AED UNITS

The Security Team is looking to purchase two AED units (defibrillators) for the synagogue and religious school buildings. These units come with foolproof step-by-step instructions and, as such, can be used by anyone in the congregation. In a cardiac emergency any one of us could save the life of a loved one.

These units are very expensive, so we plan to purchase refurbished units at a cost of \$600-\$800 each.

If you are interested in making a donation towards the purchase of these units, send your contribution to the synagogue and earmark it for the "AED units."

Help us to help you live a healthy and happy life.

Thank you,

Your Security Team

DONATIONS

Endowment Fund

- In memory of Lois Levin Holstine from Ron & Kathy Keyser
- In memory of Lois Levin Holstine from Mansoor & Janet Emral Shaool
- In memory of Lois Levin Holstine from Sharon Wagshal & Art Feiveson
- In memory of Lois Levin Holstine from Lawrence & Cheryl Sinoway
- In memory of Lois Levin Holstine from Jerry & Marlene Falke
- In memory of Lois Levin Holstine from Dick & Brigie Greenwald
- In memory of Lois Levin Holstine from Brenda & Joel Rosenthal
- In memory of Lois Levin Holstine from Jerry & Jenny Bullington
- In memory of Lois Levin Holstine from Ronald & Leura Sulchek
- In honor of Amy Kerstein's Birthday from Ed & Hannah Baer

General Fund

- In memory of Lois Levin Holstine from George & Marcia Miller

What A Day This Was — November 13, 2016



What a day this was. We started with a nice brunch crowd intrigued by a captivating presentation of the concurrent, disparate lives of Jewish and Palestinian women growing up in Jerusalem, not five miles apart. Noa Baum, an award-winning storyteller, educator and public speaker, did not disappoint, as she recounted her personal tale – a small taste of her recent memoir *A LAND TWICE PROMISED* – a dissertation on conflict resolution and mutual compassion.

Many then adjourned to our cemetery, joined by others, where a brief, but meaningful Veterans Day service was conducted by Rabbi Ari. Joe and Ray, vets themselves, read the lengthy list of congregants who have honorably served or are now serving our Nation. TAPS by Doug echoed through the neighborhood and, when the resonance subsided, Rachel led us in song. What a day this was.

FRANK SINATRA AND THE JEWS — *Excerpted from bio by Jennifer Siegel, 2005*

Many of you know already that Frank gave two concerts in the desert that raised \$ 3 million dollars for a new Temple in Palm Springs and he was at the Yom Kippur services when it opened. He lived on the grounds of a Jewish country club too.

Francis Albert Sinatra (1915-1998) may have been one of America's most famous Italian Catholics, but he kept the Jewish people and the State of Israel close to his heart, manifesting life-long commitments to fighting anti-Semitism and to activism on behalf of Israel.

Sinatra stepped forward in the early 1940s, when big names were needed to rouse America into saving Europe's remaining Jews, and he sang at an "*Action for Palestine*" rally (1947). He sat on the board of trustees of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre; and donated over \$1 million to Jerusalem's Hebrew University, which honoured him by dedicating the Frank Sinatra International Student Centre. (The Centre made heartbreaking headlines when terrorists bombed it in 2002, killing nine people.)

As the result of his support for the Jewish State, his movies and records were banned in some Arab countries. Sinatra helped Teddy Kollek, later the long-serving mayor of Jerusalem but then a member of the Haganah, serving as a \$1 million money-runner that helped Israel win the war.

The Copacabana Club, which was very much run and controlled by the same Luciano-related New York mafia crowd with whom Sinatra had become enmeshed, happened to be next door to the hotel out of which Haganah members were operating. In his autobiography, Kollek relates how, trying in March 1948 to circumvent an arms boycott imposed by President Harry Truman on the Jewish fighters in Eretz Yisrael, he needed to smuggle about \$1 million in cash to an Irish ship captain docked in the Port of New York. The young Kollek spotted Sinatra at the bar and, afraid of being intercepted by federal agents, asked for help. In the early hours of the morning, the singer went out the back door with the money in a paper bag and successfully delivered it to the pier.

The origins of Sinatra's love affair with the Jewish people are not clear but, for years, the Hollywood icon wore a small mezuzah around his neck, a gift from Mrs. Golden, an elderly Jewish neighbour who cared for him during his boyhood in Hoboken, N.J. (years later, he honoured her by purchasing a quarter million dollars' worth of Israel bonds).

He protected his Jewish friends, once responding to an anti-Semitic remark at a party by simply punching the offender. Time magazine reported that Sinatra walked out on the christening of his own son when the priest refused to allow a Jewish friend to be the godfather.

As late as 1979, he raged over the fact that a Palm Springs cemetery official in California declared that he could not arrange the burial of a deceased Jewish friend over the Thanksgiving holiday; Sinatra again threatened to punch him in the nose.

Sinatra famously played the role of a Jewish pilot in *Cast a Giant Shadow*, the 1966 film filmed in Israel and starring friend Kirk Douglas as Mickey Marcus, the Jewish-American colonel who fought and died in Israel's war for independence (Sinatra dive-bombs Egyptian tanks with seltzer bottles!) He donated his salary for the part to the Arab-Israeli Youth Centre in Nazareth and he also made a significant contribution to the making of *Genocide*, a film about the Holocaust, and helped raise funds for the film.

Less known is *Sinatra in Israel* (1962), a short 45-minute featurette he made in which he sang *In the Still of the Night* and *Without a Song*. He also starred in *The House I Live In* (1945)*, a ten-minute short film made to oppose anti-Semitism at the end of World War II, which received an Honorary Academy Award and a special Golden Globe award in 1946.

The film "*The House I Live In*" was shown to children at 'assembly' in PS#4 in the lower east side of Manhattan. It may seem kind of 'corny' now but it was produced at the end of WW II and then, to a kid from the lower east side, it was inspiring. Come to think of it, it still is. [WATCH IT HERE](#)

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

Contact Monda Sagalkin to learn how you can plan a self-sustaining gift to B'nai Abraham.
(240) 291-6983 or monsansagalkin@aol.com

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
falkeq@hotmail.com

Yahrzeit Plaques

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

DOR L' DOR

Joan Becker (301) 791-7175

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