

CONNECTIONS

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2019 | 24 Tevet 5779–23 Adar 5779 | bnaiabraham.net



FROM THE RABBI

There's a real power in how we remember certain tragic moments. We know we can have the most vividly emotional recollections of hearing certain horrible national news. It can be a defining experience. It might be remembrance of hearing of

the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the specter of watching the Challenger explosion, or learning of the fateful attack of 9/11. These are indelible moments of memory etched in time. Of course, we have all experienced similar personal moments of pain, receiving difficult personal news. But there's something unique about the very strong emotional reactions when we relate collectively to a shared shocking experience.

Pittsburgh's synagogue takes its name from a passage in the Book of Proverbs, one sung as the Torah is returned to the ark: "It is a tree of life to all who grasp it, and whoever holds on to it is happy; its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace." (3:17-18) It is still incomprehensible that while we were studying from the tree of life in our weekly Torah study other Jews were being murdered for that same devotion.

Our parsha from that week describes how the patriarch Abraham opens his tent on all sides to those who were wandering. This is the image that we seek for ourselves and for others. We want our sanctuaries — and all of America

— to be places of welcome and refuge. But how do we make this hope a reality?

An irony is that the destiny of a people is determined by purposeful endeavors of individuals. Individual actions bring about the possibility of redemption. A sage once asked in regard to Abraham's faithfulness, "How do you know that whoever takes upon himself the obligation to carry out a single religious duty in faith is worth that the Holy Spirit should rest upon him?" It was the individual acts of faith of Abraham that eventually made possible redemption.

Beyond the terrible memory I have of that immediate time, I also have another equally vivid, positive memory. I will never forget how our synagogue on Monday evening was overflowing with congregants representing many faith backgrounds. I also remember how my fellow clergy and friends from HARC came together in solidarity and support.

As many of you know, in addition to serving as your rabbi, I am blessed to serve as the president of the Hagerstown Area Religious Council. This past year alone HARC fed over 1,000 children every week who would otherwise go hungry; put more than 11,000 books into the hands of children; supported 50 families with skills to prepare their children to enter school ready to learn; re-settled 44 people (including 17 children and 3 seniors) into permanent housing following the closing of the Garden Motel; and led over 50 interfaith learning opportunities, inter-religious

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FROM THE RABBI—CONTINUED

services and public witness activities with high visibility in the greater community.

I am certain that the individual acts of the inter-religious community are a powerful force that sustains our tree of life. As Americans and as Jews, we have lived through

difficult times before. Our individual acts of faith are what have sustained us, beginning with Abraham. It is not any one rabbi, or even all of the clergy of HARC, but the sum total of the acts of faith of all that will sustain us now and into the future.

—Rabbi Plost

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thomas Jefferson wrote that “from time to time, the tree of liberty must be refreshed by the blood of patriots.” His meaning was that liberty was a fragile thing. It was constantly under pressure and needed protecting even with the life of the patriot.

But he never wrote, much less thought, that from time to time, the tree of life must be refreshed by the blood of innocents. He never postulated the feral, distorted hatred that led someone to kill eleven Jews as they performed sacred communal rituals in the sanctuary of their Synagogue on Shabbat morning.

But are we really surprised? One might argue that it should not have been called a “Sanctuary” in the first place since it gave no safe place. Further, one could add that since atrocities against Jews in our temples have occurred for centuries and continue even to today that the premise of sanctuary is a child’s fantasy and only marginally useful.

But, as Jews, our truth is that we must hold that there must be a sanctuary even if it is only in our hearts. We must have a place to come together, putting away armor and swords against each other even if we must hold them against the outside world.

And what Sanctuary we had. Our Rabbi organized a coming together of religious and political leaders that filled our Temple to memorialize the fallen and demonstrate that the bonds of love between people in our community was stronger than the hate spewed by the vicious. Even though there was pain, fear and anxiety we could be comforted by the fact that we were not alone.

We have trying times but we must remember that we are the Children of Abraham. We must not forget to hold each other dear. We must remember to see ourselves in each other.

We are not blind or unaware. We can learn, change and grow. Please help me remember who we are. I do not ask or expect anyone to forget the past. But I hope you will help me to repair and rejuvenate for the future. Let’s move forward in a renewed spirit of shared faith, family and, community. Let’s nurture our tree of life with teshuva, acceptance and love. Let us act with honor and speak with truth.

—Leon Seidman

MARK YOUR CALENDAR—UPCOMING EVENTS

Fri	1/11	6:15 PM	Religious School Shabbat Dinner (for religious school children/guardians)	SUN	1/13	10 AM	Sunday School
		7 PM	Religious School Shabbat (all welcome)	WED	1/16	7 PM	Board of Trustees Meeting
		7:30 PM	Shabbat Services	FRI	1/18	7:30 PM	Tu Bishvat Service
SAT	1/12	9:30 AM	Torah Study	SAT	1/19	9:30 AM	Torah Study
		7 PM	Movie Night: <i>Deli Man</i>				

IN THE HOSPITAL?

Due to hospital policy, clergy and CBA volunteers have no way of knowing you are in the hospital unless you or a family member inform us. CONTACT: Rabbi Plost, 301-733-5039 or ariplost@gmail.com.

MAKE A DONATION

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.

The minimum contribution to the Endowment Trust Fund is \$10.00. To make contributions to ANY FUND, please send your check, with clear explanation to Congregation B'nai Abraham, 53 E. Baltimore, St., Hagerstown, MD 21740

General Fund, Endowment Funds, 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

CBA DIRECTORY

Rabbi Plost: 301-733-5039,
ariplost@gmail.com

Contributions: Leon Seidman,
301-573-0508, catnip133@aol.com

Dor L' Dor: Leon Seidman,
301-573-0508, catnip133@aol.com

Tree of Life: Jerry Falke,
301-739-8456, falkeg@hotmail.com

Yahrzeit Plaques: Ben Chlebnikow,
301-791-6590, bchleb77@aol.com

Special Thanks:

It truly has been a season of giving, as many of our CBA members have devoted their time and efforts through various volunteer opportunities, both at CBA and in the community.

Latke Makers:

Thank you to: Carol Fitzwater, Organizer. Lieba and Jerry Cohen, Preston and Reese Plost, Barb Schwab, Al Schiff, Abe Lachman and David, Chrissy, Ruby and Kate Riesenber.

Hanukkah Party Committee:

Thanks to: Kendra Tidd, Organizer. Lori and Steve Slavick, Carrol Lourie, Jennifer Weiss, Barbara Schwab, Mike Armel, and Rachel Nichols.

REACH's Cold Weather Shelter Volunteers:

CBA provided the volunteers on Monday, December 10 at REACH's Cold Weather Shelter. Thanks to: Kim, Jack, Carol Metzner and family for providing the meal and serving over 50 dinners.

To Jerry and Lieba Cohen, Rachel Nichols, David Hanan, Ira and Carrol Lourie, Al Schiff, Steve Slavick for checking in, assisting with laundry and shmoozing with the guests.



Red Cross Gift Wrapping:

The CBA elves were hard at work on Christmas Eve wrapping gifts at the Red Cross's Caring Hands booth in Valley Mall. Last minute shoppers were relieved, a good time was had by all and we raised probably close to \$1,000 for the Red Cross. Many thanks to: Susan Levin, Julie Whitener, Alison Whitener, Kiriah Whitener, Nikita Lunin (Whitener), Al Schiff, Nadine Fox, Laura Rohrer (and

Cole!), Lieba and Jerry Cohen, Rachel Nichols.

Historic Houses of Worship Tour:

About 165 people toured our sanctuary on December 26 during the Downtown Historic Houses of Worship Tour. Thanks to Ira Cooke for organizing docents: Lieba and Jerry Cohen, Barb Schwab, Rachel Nichols and Mike Armel. Photo by Alexis Fitzpatrick, Herald-Mail Media.



Hanukkah Celebration!

A joyful Hanukkah celebration was held on December 7 with nearly 90 in attendance. The children (and children-at-heart) had fun making a Hanukkah craft before convening in the Social Hall for a sumptuous feast of latkes, brisket and a dizzying array of side dishes.

Singing led to the lighting of the giant menorah, where the candle lighters were chosen by dreidle spins. Then it was off to the Sanctuary for the lighting of personal menorahs in the darkened sanctuary. It was a beautiful sight to behold.



Jew Bill Commemoration

December 8, 2018 marked the 200th anniversary of Thomas Kennedy's introduction of the "Jew Bill" that opened doors for Jews to fully serve in public life in Maryland. That evening, the last night of Hanukkah, a short menorah lighting ceremony was held at the Thomas Kennedy Memorial Park.

It was an honor to have former and current holders of Kennedy's seat in the Maryland legislature participate in the ceremony as well as other dignitaries including Don Munson, Lewis Metzner, Brett Wilson, Paul Corderman and Andrew Serafini. Music was provided by David Loy, Ruth Japzon-Stenger and Rachel Nichols.

From left: Tom Riford, Executive Director of the Thomas Kennedy Center, Rabbi Ari Plost, Delegate Paul Corderman, and Leon Seidman.



From the Religious School

The CBA Religious school is off to a great start this year with over 40 children enrolled in the various programs. We have been meeting monthly for class and also for special events such as the "Sweet N Sour" Family Shabbat and holiday celebrations. This year, the children have learned about the Sh'ma prayer, our responsibility to be of service to our community and of course, how to win gummy bears in a game of dreidel. Looking ahead into 2019, we are excited to begin preparations for a family fun day as well as the Purim carnival in March.

For many, you may not be aware of the offerings within our religious school. We provide three Sunday school

classes—tots, youth and teens taught by Leah Shaw, Rabbi Ari and Michelle Plost once a month. We also provide a custom learning approach for children studying



for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. These programs would not be possible without the help of numerous parent and congregant volunteers. Thank you so much for your help! If you have any questions about the religious school, please contact Javier Tellez, school administration at 301-331-6087.



TREES IN ISRAEL

Planting a tree in Israel is the perfect way to show you care. Trees can be planted for all occasions. They 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 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 or to place an order, please email or call: Carrol Lourie, 240-818-7555, cglourie@gmail.com.

GIFT PLANNING

Learn how you can plan a self-sustaining gift to CBA. CONTACT: Leon Seidman, 301-573-0508, catnip133@aol.com.

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.

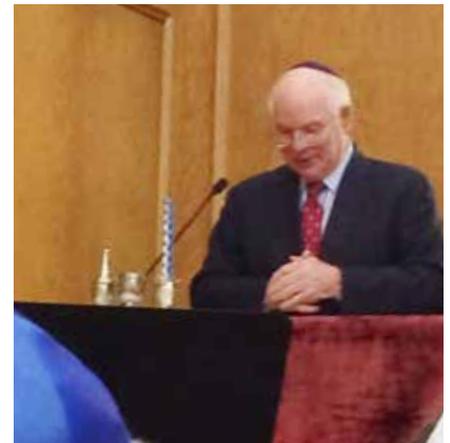
Main coordinator (receives initial call from the rabbi, meals and transportation needs):
Barbara Schwab, 254-291-2957,
barbmaimo@yahoo.com

For home visits or outings:
Sharon Wagshal, 301-797-3220,
sharonwag@aol.com

2018 Gala Concert Report

On the 125th Anniversary of B'nai Abraham: A Concert Celebrating the Enduring Legacy of Thomas Kennedy, was held in the Sanctuary of CBA and a reception in the Social Hall on Saturday evening, June 16, 2018. Guest Conductor and Composer Simon Sargon conducted the celebratory concert featuring his arrangements performed by the Choir consisting of eight CBA member and six special friends; Music Director, Co-Conductor, and Pianist David Loy; Flautist Destiny Ortiz; and Guest Cantor/ Soloist Susan Berkson, a "daughter" of Congregation B'nai Abraham. The musical program was capped by the international premiere of Simon Sargon's commissioned work, **Come Fill Up Your Glasses**, in tribute to Thomas Kennedy, Maryland legislator and author of the "Jew Bill," enabling Jewish citizens of Maryland to hold public elective office with passage in 1826. The leaders of the event were co-chair Rachel Nichols, who conceived of the idea of a musical anniversary celebration and was instrumental in networking with Simon Sargon, and co-chair Buck Macht, who liked Rachel's concept and worked with her to create a concert gala fundraiser where the legacy of Thomas Kennedy could also be celebrated through recognition of CBA congregants who had or are serving in public office.

Former and current CBA members recognized who have served or are serving in public office in Frederick and Washington counties were the following: former Maryland Delegates Jacob Berkson and Richard Grumbacher; former Hagerstown City Councilman Fred Kramer; current Frederick County Councilwoman Jessica Fitzwater; and current Hagerstown City Councilman Lewis Metzner. Keynote speaker was United States Senator Ben Cardin, who was a 2008 Thomas Kennedy Award recipient as a former member of the Maryland House of Delegates.



The Gala Concert 125th

Anniversary Celebration had total gross revenues of \$30,372.40, comprised \$28,235.00 in cash plus \$2,137.40 in-kind contribution by a congregant for the commissioned Sargon musical work. With all receipts and expenses paid, the event netted \$20,973.11.

In addition to the financial and spiritual boost the Gala afforded B'nai Abraham, there was excellent media coverage of the event that cast CBA in a positive light to the broader community. There was a substantial article in "The Washington Jewish Week," perhaps the first time B'nai Abraham has ever been written up in this important DC Metro outlet. In addition, the local newspaper and television station did stories. Here are links to all:

- washingtonjewishweek.com/46706/hagerstown-jews-look-back-125-years/arts/arts_features/



- www.heraldmillmedia.com/news/local/congregation-b-nai-abraham-to-celebrate-th-anniversary-with-gala/article_87133ad2-6f63-11e8-b6f5-f38299847c01.html
- www.localdvm.com/news/maryland/concert-gala-honors-congregation-b-nai-abraham-s-125th-anniversary-and-thomas-kennedy/1244123282

I am often asked how is it possible to raise this much money from our Galas, especially one as complex as this year's 2018 event? My answer is to be blessed with an excellent committee of hard-working volunteers and a generous, supportive congregation. As listed in the event program, I again want to recognize our committee members: Mike Armel, Lieba Cohen, Sandy Gagliardi, Gil Godlewski, Tyrone Johnson, Carol and Howard Mendelsohn, Marjorie Roames, Rachel Nichols, Monda Sagalkin, Barbara Schwab, Leon Seidman, Kendra Tidd, and Sharon Wagshal. At the risk of hopefully not leaving anyone out, volunteers behind the scene to be recognized include Mansoor and Janet Emral Shaool, Gerald Falke, Douglas Lieberman, Marcia and George Miller, Trudie Holder for administrative support, Donald Wingfield (facilities), and Otterbein United Methodist Church (chairs). And also a "Todah Rabah" to Rabbi Ari Plost, Tom Riford, Executive Director of the Thomas Kennedy Center, and Monda Salgalkin, President, TKC Board of Directors and CBA President at the time of the Gala.

Some interesting facts about the Gala include the following:
 Tickets: 121 tickets sold to the event raised \$4,560.00; there were 17 donations (14 of these CBA congregants) for tickets from people who did not attend the event totaling \$1,110.00;

20 gratis (comp) tickets were given to honored guests and/or congregants in need who wanted to attend; total ticket sales was \$5,670.00

143 persons—83 congregants and 60 friends from the community attended the event, including former CBA Rabbi Stanley Skolnik.

Sponsors: 34 sponsors donated a total of \$16,570.00. 1 additional sponsor donated \$2,000.00 in-kind to cover Sargon's commissioned musical song Come Fill Up Your Glasses. Total raised by sponsors was \$18,570.00

Tributes: 9 congregant families totaled \$1,275.00

Ads: 24 ads from businesses in the community totaled \$3,875.00;

I received many favorable comments about the delicious foods provided by Bagel-Lisious.

Again, we can't thank everyone enough who donated his/her time, purchased tickets and attended the event or donated in support of the event even if one couldn't attend, as well as those who contributed as sponsors, tribute writers, and/or ads.

Rachel and I want to thank everyone who participated in the program. We could not have done this without the dedicated and hard work of the CBA Choir and friends. We give thanks to the public officials and elected representatives who came to celebrate the legacy of Thomas Kennedy with us on our 125th Anniversary. Susan Berkson and her friends and guests offered gracious support, as did the Sargon family. Thanks also to the clergy and friends from HARC. And lastly, thank you to our Jewish congregants and families who have served and are serving in public office.

Buck Macht, 2918 Gala Co-Chair
 Rachel Nichols, 2018 Gala Co-Chair
 October 22, 2018

Donations:

- Carol Metzner in memory of her grandfather Herman Rosenwald.
 - Siri Sophar and John Fontane in memory of Kelly and Gerald.
- Apologies if we missed acknowledging anyone's donation during the transition period.

YAHREITS

JAN 1 Frank Hollin Ray Kruger	JAN 11 Harry Levin* Edward Rosenblatt David Strumpf	Lena Meyers* Ida Ginsberg Ray Rosenbloom	FEB 6 Lillian Geber* Annie S. Kaplan* Jack Levine* Leonard Freed Dora Honig Edith Suls	FEB 12 Ida Schiffman	Hannah Greenwald* Meyer Greenberg
JAN 2 H. Albert Lehrman Albert Yoselowitz	JAN 12 Lyda Levovitz* Louis Rosen	JAN 22 Dr. William J. Falk* Milton Weidenfeld	FEB 7 Moses S. Grossman*	FEB 13 Max Lyon* Edward Selkow* Dr. Leo Bernstein	FEB 25 Mary Leitz
JAN 3 Bernard Levit Herman Rosenwald Israel Silverfield	JAN 13 Lee Mitchell Schlossberg	JAN 23 Abraham Saltzman* Irene Raitzyk Lee Feldman	FEB 8 Elaine Kirson	FEB 17 Robert Falke Marion Saville Thelma Goldman	FEB 26 Samuel Kramer*
JAN 4 Hyman Kronstadt Rudolph H. Mendelsohn*	JAN 14 Frieda Brull Stanley A. Chatkin Helena Sorkowitz	JAN 24 Bruce T. Jerney	FEB 9 Benjamin Blumenthal* Ruth Berkson Herman Rosenbloom	FEB 19 James Michaux Pearl Kruger	FEB 27 Helen Pashen* Pearl Rosen*
JAN 5 Brener Brener* Esther Selis Hur- witz Milton Wulk Maish Lafferman Nina Rosenthal*	JAN 15 Mary Berkson* Gladys M. Eaton Sally Lehrman Freda Pashen Blanche Salod Florence Samel	JAN 25 Dine Cohen*	FEB 10 Miriam Blitzer Elenor Rubinstein Frieda Kronstadt*	FEB 20 Rose Taylor*	FEB 28 Robert Brandt
JAN 6 Hilda Stein	JAN 16 Bertha Rosenberg* Sarah Kronenberg Rebecca Messer Gertrude Sorkowitz	JAN 26 Evelyn Goldman	FEB 11 Edith Novenstein* Joseph Kramer James Neveil	FEB 21 Leopold Selis* Lou Margolis	<i>* Denotes Yahrzeit Plaque in Sanctuary</i>
JAN 7 Albert L. Kurtz Edward E. Oppenheim	JAN 17 Joseph Brenner* Alvin Reed	JAN 27 Joseph B. Kross	FEB 1 Abraham Barbanell*	FEB 22 Saul Levin* Bernice Leighton Charles Markely Hilde Shapiro*	
JAN 8 Carroll P. Abrams* Harry G. Kaplan* Ethel Schindler* Ethel Simon* Anna Greenwald	JAN 18 Max Apfeldorf	JAN 29 Arthur Alter Gilbert Nielsen	FEB 2 Robert N. Schiff	FEB 23 Charles Markely Hilde Shapiro*	
JAN 9 Ruth K. Kopp* Naomi Macht* Isadore Bowers Benjamin Wagshal	JAN 19 Eva Dubin Bertha Langenstein	FEB 1 Abraham Barbanell*	FEB 3 Celia Heisler Klein* Max Ruben* Jerome Macht	FEB 24 Max M. Gerber*	
JAN 10 Rose Gerber* Hazel Becker Violet Pevenstein	JAN 20 Abraham Meyers* Justin N. Scharf* William Fifield	FEB 4 James Brener* Bertha Goldblatt Lawrence Sharpe*	FEB 5 Bernard Louis Cohen* Dora Henry Goldie Snyder		

UPCOMING ONEG SCHEDULE

FRI	1/11	Steve & Lori Slavick, chairs; Al Schiff
FRI	1/18	Liz Krell, chair; Gerald & Marlene Falke
FRI	1/25	Buck & Barbara Macht, chairs; Tyrone Johnson
FRI	2/1	Nadine Fox, chair; Paul Waldman & Mary Money
FRI	2/8	Bob & Barby Weiss, chairs; Tim & Laura Rohrer
FRI	2/15	Sharon Wagshal, chair; Julie Ferron
FRI	2/22	Ira & Carrol Lourie, chairs; Frederic & Susanne Kass



Congregation B'nai Abraham

בני אברהם

49 E. Baltimore St.
Hagerstown, MD 21740

bnaibraham.net

RABBI

Ariel D. Plost

CONGREGATION B'NAI ABRAHAM OFFICERS

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