

FEBRUARY HIGHLIGHTS

Rabbi Schultz asks us to explore what it means to love thy neighbor in a month where the world around us focuses heavily on Valentine's Day. Page 3

Rabbi Marion draws parallels between snowflakes and tears as she reflects on the importance of giving ourselves permission to feel sadness. Page 5

Alexa Cohen shares the value of cooking with children as an educational experience, both at Bonim Preschool and at home. Page 6

Ira Wise discusses his Zionism and an upcoming adventure he will be undertaking in Israel this coming fall. Page 7

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See page 8 to learn about a new Jews and Music Series led by Rabbi Schultz.

SAVE THE DATE: PURIM COMEDY NIGHT—LIZ GLAZER LIVE AT B'NAI ISRAEL (WE HOPE!)

Saturday, March 19, 2022 at 8:00 p.m.
Liz Glazer is an award-winning standup comedian, actor, and writer. Liz won first place in the Boston Comedy Festival and Ladies of Laughter Competition. She was also part of the Seattle International Comedy Competition and will appear on the upcoming HBO Women in Comedy

Festival. As an actor, Liz has appeared on ABC's "For Life" and CBS's "Bull," and is on the faculty at Lesly Kahn & Co., the Los Angeles acting studio.



B'NAI ISRAEL SMALL GROUPS

Our Small Groups at B'nai Israel are growing! Small Groups are a new way to connect with members of the B'nai Israel community who share a similar interest, passion, or hobby. The groups are intentionally small, up to twelve people, so members can build relationships with one another in a more intimate setting. We already have wonderful small groups focused on art, wine, and kayaking. You can find information about all our small groups on our website. Here are three new Small Groups we're adding in February to build new connections in our community:

MSG - Men's Spiritual Group Thursday, February 24 at 7:30 p.m.

Calling all men of B'nai Israel! Join us for a monthly schmooze-fest. Yes, there will be talk of the spiritual, but also the secular, the news of the day, and what's most pressing on your mind, plus some fun, to take your mind off of the day's troubles. We're aiming to lift spirits and put everyone in a good frame of mind with a friendly, low-key conversation. Bring yourself, bring your voice, and

bring your ideas. Who knows, maybe someday MSG will stand for the world's most famous men's group!

Contact Group Leaders: Scott Verchin (scottverchin@gmail.com) or Scott Smith (Scottsmith@optonline.net)

B'nai Israel Runners Club

Please join us for the inaugural B'nai Israel Runners Club! This casual and friendly group will meet once a week and run anywhere from 2-5 miles followed by coffee and light snacks. The plan is to explore iconic running spots throughout the city of Bridgeport that truly give meaning to the name Park City, including St. Mary's by the Sea, Seaside Park, and Beardsley Park. The group is open to runners of all abilities from newcomers and those who might be interested in running their first 5k to experienced marathoners.

Contact Group Leader: David Krulewich (david.krulewich@gmail.com)

SHARING OUR JOY...

In Celebration of:

Aleksey & Raisa Ledvich, on the birth of granddaughter, Shelley Rose, daughter of Mikhail & Katy Ledvich, sister of Vanessa & Eli.

Linda Liefland & Jon Orleans, on the engagement of daughter, Rebecca Orleans, to Michael Chang.

Lori & Ken Berger, on the marriage of daughter, Arielle, to Justin Gmoser.

Shari and Brian Nerreau, on the marriage of son Brad, to Samantha Russell.

SINCERE SYMPATHY

We extend our sympathy to the bereaved families of:

Max Plager, father of Charles Plager
Barbara Derwallis, mother of Tim Derwallis

**SAVE
THE
DATE!**

**JUNE 11,
2022**



Celebrating Rabbi Evan Schultz
on his 10th Anniversary at
B'nai Israel!



BULLETIN BOARD

Mitzvah Morning – February 13, 2022

For February Mitzvah Morning we will be partnering with Operation Hope to prepare meals for delivery to hungry families in the Fairfield/Bridgeport area. To ensure the safety of our volunteers, we will be preparing the meals at home and delivering them together to Operation Hope in Fairfield.

Operation Hope is in need of meals that can be frozen and distributed through their food pantry. The types of meals they have requested include chili (both vegetarian and meat), soups with protein, meat loaf, chicken casserole, meat lasagna, and various pasta dishes with protein. They also have asked for baked goods such as cookies, muffins, and brownies.

Volunteers should package the food to feed 4 people if possible. Large trays of food should be divided into smaller portions so they can be frozen and packaged for the food pantry. Volunteers should also label their food with a list of ingredients.

We will then meet on February 13 at 12:00 noon to deliver the food to Operation Hope, located at 636 Old Post Road, Fairfield, CT.

A sign-up sheet will be posted in Hashavua, which will allow all volunteers to see what types of food others are making so as not to duplicate too much.

This is a wonderful opportunity to spend a Sunday morning providing much needed nourishment to hungry families in our community....all from the comfort of your home. And if you are already planning on making a dish for the Super Bowl, why not make a little extra!

For further information, please reach out to Nina Silberman (ninahv@aol.com) or Mitch Weinstein (mitchellew@yahoo.com).

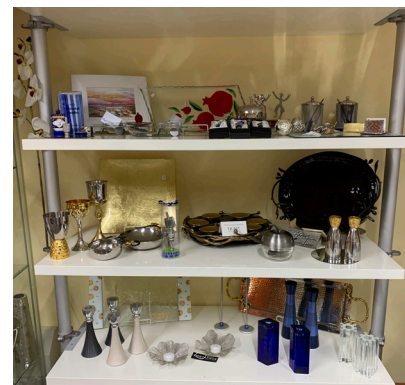
About Operation Hope:

“Operation Hope provides individuals and families the opportunity to experience transformative change. Its program and services focus on eliminating hunger and homelessness and are designed to help people solve their crises and build stability in an environment in which compassion inspires dignity and hope.”

Judaica shop



The Judaica boutique stocks many gifts as well as beautiful items for your home. For personal appointments please contact: Karen Sanger (203-767-0830) or Sylvia Neiger (203-895-7348)





FROM THE RABBI'S DESK/RABBI EVAN SCHULTZ

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “LOVE THY NEIGHBOR?”

It is once again that month when chocolate hearts fill the grocery store shelves and red Hallmark envelopes adorn the greeting card aisles. Love or hate Valentine's Day, I do enjoy the opportunity once a year to focus on some aspect of love in the Jewish tradition. Love is a prevalent concept in Jewish writings and teachings from our prayer services where we chant the *V'ahavta* and sing *Ahavat Olam*, professing our love for God and God's love for us, to the command to “Love Thy Neighbor,” which I will focus on here in this article.

What exactly does it mean to “Love Thy Neighbor?” Let's take a look at a few texts from our tradition and some questions that might help us understand the concept a little bit better:

Text #1: Leviticus 19:17-18

You shall not hate your kinsfolk in your heart. Reprove your kinsman but incur no guilt because of them. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against your countrymen.
Love your fellow as yourself: I am the Lord.

Text #2: The Jewish “Golden Rule” (Sifra Kedoshim 2:4)

“And you shall love your neighbor as yourself”: R. Akiva says: This is the [“a”?] great principle in the Torah.

Text #3: Jay Sklar, Leviticus (2014), p. 247

Love is not first and foremost a feeling, but an action. In this context, such love means a person is to forgive a neighbor's wrongs as quickly as his or her



own. More broadly applied, it means a person is to show others the same practical care he or she shows himself or herself.

Text #4: Samuel E. Balentine, Leviticus (2002), p. 165

The word love implies both attitude and act; one must not only feel love but also act in ways that translate love into concrete deeds. Just as one expresses love for God through active obedience to God's commandments, so one must demonstrate love for others by reaching out to them with tangible deeds of compassion and concern... The word neighbor refers to a wide range of persons with whom Israel would have had relationships...The “neighbor” is not limited to the peer with whom one shares a certain social status. It is also the disadvantaged person shunted to the edges of society, especially those persons the community may be tempted to ignore...

Text #5: Nancy Sherman, “Taking Responsibility for Our Emotions” (1999), p. 294

We often hold people morally responsible for their emotions.

We praise individuals for their compassion, think less of them for their ingratitude or hatred, reproach self-righteousness and unjust anger. In the cases I have in mind, the ascriptions of responsibility are not simply for offensive behaviors or actions which may accompany the emotions, but for the emotions themselves as motives or states of mind. We praise and blame people for what they feel and not just for how they act. In cases where people may subtly mask their hatred or ingratitude through more kindly actions, we still may find fault with the attitude we see leaking through the disguise.

Which of the interpretations most resonates with you? How does this help you to understand the mitzvah of “Love Thy Neighbor?” My hope in studying these texts either on your own or with friends or family is that you may develop a deeper understanding of how to enact this commandment, which is considered of the highest level in Jewish tradition, perhaps by offering more deeds of love and compassion or shifting your attitude and feelings towards your neighbors.

SHABBAT SERVICE SCHEDULE

In person on Fridays at 6:00 p.m. and Saturdays at 8:00 a.m. where indicated.
All services at this time can also be viewed on Zoom. The link is sent out in our weekly email.

Friday, February 4

5:00 p.m. Havurah
6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom
Torah Portion –
Terumah, Exod. 25:1-27:19
Haftarah – 1 Kings 5:26-6:13

Saturday, February 5

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – on Zoom Only
9:30 a.m. Torah Study - on Zoom Only

Friday, February 11

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom
Torah Portion –
Tetzaveh, Exod. 27:20-30:10
Haftarah – Ezekiel 43:10-27

Saturday, February 12

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – on Zoom Only
9:30 a.m. Torah Study - on Zoom Only

Friday, February 18

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom
Torah Portion – Ki Tisa, Exod. 30:11-34:35
Haftarah – 1 Kings 18:1-39

Saturday, February 19

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – on Zoom Only
9:30 a.m. Torah Study - on Zoom Only

Friday, February 25

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom –

Guest Speaker - Liyad Osmo, will be joining us on Zoom
Torah Portion –
Vayak'hel, Exod. 35:1-38:20
Haftarah – 11 Kings 11:17-12:17

7:00 p.m. Shabbat Dinner (in person, subject to change)

8:00 p.m. Conversation with Liyad Osmo – in person (subject to change) and on Zoom

Saturday, February 26

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – on Zoom Only
9:30 a.m. Torah Study – on Zoom Only

INTRODUCING THE B'NAI ISRAEL GREEN TEAM

We are so excited to introduce the newest of the *Tikkun Olam* committees: The B'nai Israel Green Team (BIGT). Inspired by Rabbi Marion's Rosh Hashanah sermon about letting go of Ziplock bags as a metaphor for becoming more conscious consumers and making personal changes in our lives to benefit both us and our planet, we formed this committee to catalyze environmental change within the synagogue. With Rabbi Marion as our sponsor, we, Michelle Serlin and Brad Kerner, are co-chairing this committee with a three-part goal:

1. To review daily life at the temple and help make this sacred space also a green, eco-friendly space.
2. To learn about sustainability efforts in Bridgeport and

how we can contribute to these efforts.

3. To seek a national sustainability advocacy effort we can support as a congregation.

If you are interested in joining our committee, please email Michelle Serlin at mserlin@mac.com. Our next meeting is Sunday, February 6 at 9:30 a.m. at the temple.

Make sure to check out our monthly column, where we'll be sharing ideas and personal experiences related to going green, in the bulletin.

Thank you for supporting our efforts to Go Green, B'nai Israel!

Michelle and Brad



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FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY/RABBI SARAH R. MARION

SHABBAT SERMON: THE STILLNESS OF SNOWFLAKES AND SADNESS

(Below is an abridged version of this sermon, delivered on January 7, 2022.

For the full version of the sermon, please visit www.cbibpt.org)

Scientists tell us that no two snowflakes are alike. They tell us that every single seemingly unremarkable white dot that falls from the sky actually contains its own brilliantly elaborate constellation of pattern and design.

The same is true, they say, for tears. Place a single teardrop under a microscope, and we see an intricate web of crystalized salt particles, each tear embodying its own beautiful array of microscopic slivers and shards.

Even though the first...or second...or third...snowfall of the year always causes the youngest – or even oldest – of us to squeal with excitement and glee, there is also something to be said, I think, about snowflakes and tears...and about snowfall and sadness.

Because with snow, everything suddenly looks and feels different. The smooth blanket of white, several inches deep, mutes and muffles the regular hum and drum of the outside world. With freshly falling snow, there is stillness. In the early morning hours after a night-long snowfall, we awake to a sudden break, pause, rupture, from the world that was. Of course, we know that it will all eventually melt down, and that the first springtime crocuses will eventually poke their way through...But until then, snow is a liminal, transitional experience between what was and what will be. ¹

Sadness is like that, too. The hushed, muted whispers of condolence. I'm so sorry for your loss. The stillness. How am I supposed to go on without him? She was just here yesterday – and now, without her, the world is no longer the same.

Or even, the immobilizing sadness and stillness that comes with illness. Or injury. Or job loss. Or divorce. Or a *pandemic*. Everything now is different. The world looks and feels so different than it once was. How am I supposed to go on? And like freshly falling snow, our teardrops cascade down our faces, and we begin to see ourselves, and others, and maybe even the world, in a whole new way.

When the Israelites learned that they were leaving Egypt, I always imagine that they were suddenly and unanimously joyful and elated and ecstatic. But it doesn't really say that in our text...in fact, it doesn't really say anything.

The brilliant author Zora Neale Hurston writes between the lines. In her retelling of the Exodus story, she imagines what the Israelites might have been thinking and feeling at that moment, and it is not what I would have expected.

She writes,

“When Moses told the Israelites that they were leaving Egypt, the people cried. He had expected wild clamor — the sound of symbols and exultant singing and dancing. But the people wept out of their eyes. Goshen – their Egyptian land, their home, their whole world – was very still. No songs or shouts. They just sat with centuries in their eyes and cried.”²

I read this passage and I imagine them sitting there, silent and motionless, as the tears blanketed their faces and the space around them, like quiet, freshly falling snow.

Tears for the grieving Egyptian mothers and fathers. Tears of guilt and shame for the lives that were lost so that they could be free. Tears for the years of their lives that were lost to slavery. Tears for

everything that slavery took from them, for everything that they would never be able to regain.

But here is the thing about snow...and perhaps tears, too. When snowflakes emerge from the atmosphere, they link up with nitrogen atoms as they make their way from the sky to the ground. Because nitrogen is essential to plant growth, snow is often called “poor man's fertilizer,” because of the way that it helps to nourish and nurture, even as it prolongs winter and perpetuates stillness. ³ Maybe tears have a similar function. Maybe tears can also nourish and nurture. Maybe when the Israelites wept, they looked around, and saw themselves and one another more clearly.

Maybe as they wept, they recognized all of the emotional weight they had been carrying – centuries of emotional weight, in fact – and as they wept together, maybe each individual saw that he was not alone. Maybe their collective weeping *legitimized* and *normalized* each one's pain. If my brother is sad, it's ok for *me* to be sad, too. And maybe it was in that moment that they truly became a people, a community, a nation.

Maybe it wasn't because of God's outstretched arm and mighty hand that they came together as one — or because of Moses' bold and brave leadership – but, rather, maybe it was *because of their tears*. Maybe it was because they stopped, and they sat, and they gave themselves *permission* to be sad. Together.

In today's world, I'm not sure that we give ourselves enough permission to be sad. In today's world, I think that we are actually quite *uncomfortable* with sadness and pain. Because in today's world, we are conditioned from a very young age with all kind of phrases and

Continued on page 15



BONIM BUZZ/ALEXA COHEN, EARLY CHILDHOOD DIRECTOR

A PINCH OF SALT AND A CUP OF CONNECTION!



Cooking is one of the richest learning experiences for young children. It is very often a part of a preschool curriculum and is a great way to teach at home. Don't worry, it has very little to do with your own expertise in the kitchen – mine is very limited. Rather, it is about skills, communication, and bonding.

Skills – Cooking provides an outstanding opportunity for children to engage with literacy, math, science, and social studies through a hands-on experience. A skilled educator will be aware of a child's current level of knowledge and will build from there. For example, if a child already recognizes numerals, but cannot yet recognize words, we might make a recipe card (or larger poster) with the number five and drawings of five eggs as part of the ingredient list. Then, in the directions, it might have the word "stir" with a drawing of spoon in a bowl. The child sees the word, associates it with the drawing, and then participates in the stirring. No need to prepare so elaborately at home, but the concept of scaffolding learning is the same. Know



what your child can do and then offer opportunities to challenge them a bit further. Children of all ages may enjoy measuring, pouring, stirring, whisking, etc. They might even love washing the dishes afterward!

Communication – There can be such rich language use during the process of

cooking. Don't water it down. "We are combining the dry ingredients." "The pasta should be firm." If children are asking you what a term means, you have found the sweet spot; a child's curiosity is really the best! Describe what you are doing. Pose questions. If a question is hard, look up the answer together.

Bonding – One of the best things about cooking with your children is that you have the opportunity to share life experiences. Any sentence that starts with "When I was a child..." is likely to elicit great joy and intrigue from your child. Consider cooking something that you made with your family as a child. Or, try something new that relates to your culture. Share the feelings you get from enjoying homemade foods. As a special extension, share this food with families or friends.

Embrace the mess that sometimes comes with cooking. Cleaning it will be a labor of love!

SMALL GROUPS FROM P. 1

Mental Health Advocacy, Support, and Awareness Group

This group is for members who live with mental health challenges or have family members who do. It is also for those professionals working in the mental health system (social workers, therapists, psychiatrists) or any allies of members

with mental health challenges. We will SUPPORT each other in our struggles with mental illness and the behavioral health system. We will ADVOCATE and promote AWARENESS to stop the stigma and myths surrounding mental illness by educating ourselves and the larger B'nai Israel community through

forums, workshops, films, etc. We hope you'll join us on Zoom at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 17 for our first meeting!

Contact Group Leaders: Adam Weisblatt (adamdanielle@gmail.com) or Beth Lazar (ladybeth885@gmail.com)



FROM THE EDUCATION CENTER GOING FOR A RIDE

I am a Zionist. I hope you are too. It is not a very popular thing to be these days, for a lot of reasons. A Zionist is someone who believes in the idea that the Jewish people are bound to our historic homeland in *Eretz Yisrael* – the land of Israel. It is a simple statement, and one that has been reinterpreted by many for many reasons.

Being a Zionist does not mean I support every action of every Prime Minister or government of the State of Israel. I have points of disagreement (and agreement) with every one of them, from David Ben Gurion to Naftali Bennet. These are human politicians who do and say things. That means that thinking people will have varying opinions about them.

And I am a Zionist. I was in Israel meeting Lidor, Yarden, and Yuval (the three Young Israeli Emissaries coming to our community that fall) when the last Gaza War broke out in 2014. I had just escorted a NFTY trip through Europe and to Israel that included four B’nai Israel kids. The rockets began flying over Tel Aviv while we were having dinner in Caesaria, 40 minutes away.

My wife, Audrey, asked me if I was going to come home early. I reminded her that every time there was conflict, our first impulse was to fly to Israel to help, but realizing we had few skills that would be helpful in a military emergency it was



Last summer, Audrey and I visited Jasmine bush in front of the house on Oliphant Street in Jerusalem, where we lived for the first year of our marriage.

best to stay home. Since I was already in Israel, the best way to show support was to not leave early. I looked in on our B’nai Israel kids and confirmed that they were being kept away from areas that might be dangerous and spoke to their parents. We are Zionists, and when family is in trouble, we don’t leave.

Jump forward six years. Our congregant (and Easton First Selectman), David Bindelglass performed total replacement of my left knee the summer of 2020. For two years, arthritis had me walking like someone who had been in a bad accident. My recovery was swift. I had a plan: I was turning sixty in the fall of 2021 and a little more than a month later would be an event called the Israel Ride. It is a fundraiser and bike ride from Jerusalem to Eilat.

I was going to prove to myself that the second half of my life (it is a common Jewish blessing to wish that someone celebrating a birthday live to 120 like Moses did) would be spent as a fully active person. The plan was to use a camera and Zoom to bring the kids in Kehilah with me, making Israel come alive for them. And the plan was to raise money to support Hazon and the Arava Institute so we can help make sure our world is more livable!

Then Israel decided that some of the COVID policies in parts of the United States were challenging to their efforts to keep Israel safe. So, the ride was cancelled. It has been rescheduled. Now I am going this November. I will be sharing the ride with any who want to follow on my blog. And I will invite any who wish to sponsor me to do so.

Why I am I going? To prove I am up to the physical challenge. To support two organizations that are using Jewish values and texts to teach us all how make our world more sustainable. To stand by Israel because I am a Zionist.

L’shalom,

Ira

“I am a Zionist. I hope you are too. It is not a very popular thing to be these days for a lot of reasons.”



ADULT JEWISH LEARNING AT CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL

**Women's Rosh Chodesh Adar/
February Gathering
Mastering the art of "Jewpanese"
Cooking with Guest Chef Aya
Nishikawa Forster
Thursday, February 10
from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. on Zoom**

Aya was born and raised in Japan and her mother and grandmother's homemade Japanese comfort food continue to influence her cooking style to this day. She believes Asian food should be approachable and wants to show others



that they, too, can learn how to make everything from dumplings to noodles to sushi. Her aim is to remove the intimidation factor and show you that with the right ingredients and a little practice, these dishes can become

part of your regular dinner rotation. You can learn more about Aya and her cooking philosophy at www.ayastable.com. *In the coming weeks, we will be sending out recipes and ingredient lists so you can cook along with Aya as she shares her recipes and techniques with us. Stay tuned!*

**Jews and Music Series with Rabbi
Schultz, Session 1 —
Bob Dylan: A Jewish Journey
Between Home and Exile
Thursday, February 17
from 8:00 - 9:00 p.m.**



Calling all music lovers! Join with Rabbi Schultz to listen to and explore the

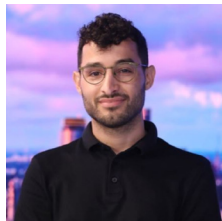
Jewish connections in the music, lyrics, and concert experiences of Bob Dylan, Phish, and Leonard Cohen. These classes should be a lot of fun for all ages and every music aficionado! (Hoping to have the classes meet in person — check Hashavua for updated information.)

Upcoming sessions:

- **Monday, March 14
from 8:00 - 9:00 p.m.**
Phish: Sacred Pilgrimage, Holy Ritual and Communal Rejoicing
- **Thursday, April 14
from 8:00 - 9:00 p.m.**
Leonard Cohen: Purpose, Conflict and Resolution

**Israel and the Arab World: The
Situation
Friday, February 25 at 7:00 p.m.,
following Kabbalat Shabbat Services
on Zoom**

Join us on Zoom with Israeli journalist Liad Osmo. He is the Arab World Affairs correspondent with Yedioth Achronot and YNET.com, the leading news website in Israel. He monitors the relations between Israel and the rest of the Middle East,



security events, internal matters in Arab countries and reveals unique stories from the region. He will discuss what is happening between Israel and Arab world beyond the borders of Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Gaza. Liad holds a B.A. in Government, Diplomacy and Strategy from Reichman University and was selected for the RU-Maxwell Leadership Program at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University.

**Dignity Grows Women's Rosh
Chodesh Gathering
RESCHEDULED
for Thursday, March 10
In-person only at B'nai Israel
from 7:30-9:00 p.m.**



"Dignity Grows" Packing Party in partnership with the Federation for Jewish Philanthropy of Upper Fairfield County and Schoke Jewish Family Service. Help us make period poverty a problem of the past! The newly launched "Dignity Grows" program of our Federation for Jewish Philanthropy aims to support women, girls, and individuals assigned female at birth who lack the resources to afford basic feminine hygiene necessities. At our Rosh Chodesh packing party, we'll learn about the ubiquity of period poverty, assemble tote bags filled with feminine products, and explore some of Judaism's various perspectives on periods, menstrual taboos, red tents, and more. The bags we assemble will go directly to our CBI/Schoke JFS Food Pantry recipients.

Packing party participants are asked to underwrite the cost of one or two tote bags, at \$10/bag. To participate, please send an email to Chris Rocha at chris@cbibpt.org by March 3, letting her know how many bags you would like to underwrite. Then, please mail a check to B'nai Israel (attn: Chris Rocha) for the number of bags you are underwriting. Checks should be made out to the Federation for Jewish Philanthropy.

*****If you've already submitted a contribution for the previously scheduled 1/13 date, we are happy to hold onto your check and apply it towards March. If you would like us to return your donation, please let us know.*****

Continued on page 11

FEBRUARY DONATIONS

(We greatly appreciate all donations to our special purpose funds.)

Rabbi Schultz Discretionary Fund

Bonnie Alterman, in memory of Ed Payess.

Lori & Ken Berger, with thanks to Rabbi Schultz for performing such a beautiful wedding ceremony for Arielle & Justin.

Stacey & Duane Berlin, in memory of Joan & Werner Berlin.

Alison Bonds & Larry Levine, a donation.

Marie Dominique Boyce-Dumas, in memory of father, Gilbert Dominique Antoine.

Joav & Lisa Burger, in memory of Lee Kirsch, mother of Mark Kirsch.

Jonathan & Jennifer Dizney, in honor of Rachel Dizney's Bat Mitzvah.

Justin Galletti, in memory of George Markley, husband of Chris Markley.

Beth Gardner, in appreciation of Rabbi Schultz for being a key player on "Team Sadie" for her Bat Mitzvah.

Gloria Katz, in memory of Bob Sheiman, husband of Ellen Sheiman.

Carol & Andy Lubin, a donation.

The Markley Family, with deep gratitude to Rabbi Schultz for all of his love and support.

Dr. Zuli & Sarae Steremberg, in memory of Dr. Robert Sheiman, husband of Ellen Sheiman.

Lauren & Jonathan Tropp, in thanks and appreciation to Rabbi Schultz for the support and guidance he provided to Gabby on her journey to rabbinical school.

Judy Weinstein, in memory of Lee Kirsch, mother of Mark Kirsch; in memory of George Markley, husband of Chris Markley.

Fredric & Ronni Zinn, in memory of brother, Joel Zinn.

Rabbi Marion Discretionary Fund

Bonnie Alterman, in memory of Ed Payess.

Alison Bonds & Larry Levine, a donation.

Beth Gardner, in appreciation of Rabbi Marion for being a key player on "Team Sadie" for her Bat Mitzvah.

Carol & Andy Lubin, a donation.

Judi Stern, in loving memory of mother, Sylvia G. Edelson.

Eileen & Howard Tolk, in loving memory of mother, Tess Valenchik.

Lauren & Jonathan Tropp, in thanks and appreciation to Rabbi Marion for the support and guidance she provided to Gabby on her journey to rabbinical school.

Rabbi James Prosnit Legacy Fund

Stacy & Rob Giglietti, in memory of Michael Giglietti, father of Rob Giglietti.

Nancy & Jeff Oberman, in honor of the birth of Micah Daniel, grandson of Rabbi Jim Prosnit & Wendy Bloch.

Marilyn S. Weinstein, in general appreciation.

Rabbi James Prosnit Discretionary Fund

The Markley Family, with deep gratitude to Rabbi Jim Prosnit for all of his love and support.

Lori & Dan Underberger, in appreciation of Rabbi Jim Prosnit, for his beautiful part II wedding ceremony for Shira & Ethan.

Music Fund

Donations made in memory of Ruth Germain Edinberg, mother of Mark Edinberg were made by:

Bari S. Dworken

Sherry Fogel

Andrea Goodman & Jeff Ackerman

Ruth & Eric Gross

Valerie & James Neary

Andrea & Michael Rudolph

Cleo & Jon Sonneborn

Marcia Tubin

Alison Bonds & Larry Levine, a donation.

Jonathan & Jennifer Dizney, in honor of Rachel Dizney's Bat Mitzvah.

Mark & Barbara Edinberg, in appreciation of Cantor Rubel.

Andrea & Dennis Feinberg, in memory of Robert Sheiman, husband of Ellen Sheiman.

Beth Gardner, in appreciation of Cantor Rubel for being a key player on

"Team Sadie" for her Bat Mitzvah.

Jackie & Jeff Madwed, in memory of Lee Kirsch, mother of Mark Kirsch.

Enhancement Fund

Donations made in memory of Lee Kirsch, mother of Mark Kirsch, were made by:

Andrea Goodman & Jeff Ackerman

Lisa & James Greenberg

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Steven Borden, a donation.

Jonathan Davis & Evelyn Rubak, a donation.

Debby & Phil Dwyer, in memory of George Markley, husband of Chris Markley.

Laurie & Dean Gaugler, a donation.

Lisa & James Greenberg, in memory of Ruth Edinberg, mother of Mark Edinberg.

John Greene, in memory of Dr. Robert Sheiman, husband of Ellen Sheiman.

Carol & Andy Lubin, a donation.

Jane & Jerry Pressman, in appreciation to Lynn and Chris for all they do.

Paul & Bernice Rosch, in memory of Mollie Rosch.

Marjorie & Michael Rosten, in memory of George Markley, husband of Chris Markley.

Laura Sheiman & Aaron Glick, in memory of Dr. Robert Sheiman, husband of Ellen Sheiman.

Sylvia Prosnit Adult Education Fund

Lauren & Jonathan Tropp, in thanks and appreciation to Rabbi Jim Prosnit for his encouragement of Gabby on her journey to rabbinical school.

Bonim Preschool Enrichment Fund

Twody & Bob Schless, in memory of Lee Kirsch, mother of Mark Kirsch.

Bonim Preschool Scholarship Fund

Alison Bonds & Larry Levine, a donation.

Religious School Scholarship Fund

Beth Gardner, in appreciation of Bonnie Appel for being a key player on "Team

Continued on page 10

FEBRUARY DONATIONS

(We greatly appreciate all donations to our special purpose funds.)

Sadie” for her Bat Mitzvah.

Aleksey & Raisa Ledvich, in honor of the birth of granddaughter, Shelley Rose, daughter of Mikhail & Katy Ledvich, sister of Vanessa & Eli.

Religious School Enrichment Fund

Alison Bonds & Larry Levine, a donation.

Carol & Andy Lubin, a donation.

Lauren & Jonathan Tropp, in thanks and appreciation to Ira Wise for being an invaluable mentor to Gabby throughout her Jewish education and for encouraging her professional path as a rabbi and Jewish educator.

Rabbi Arnold Sher Social Action Fund

Donations made in memory of George Markley, husband of Chris Markley, were made by:

Bari Dworken

Joni & Michael Greenspan

Linda Liefland & Jon Orleans

Valerie & James Neary

Debbie, Dan, Matthew, Jaime & Brooke Viens

Michael & Judy Green Blumenthal, in memory of Ruth Edinberg, mother of Mark Edinberg.

John & Ronnie Dubrowin, in honor of Beth Lazar’s birthday; in memory of Ruth Edinberg, mother of Mark Edinberg.

Bari Dworken, in memory of Lee Kirsch, mother of Mark Kirsch.

Barbara & Mark Edinberg, in honor of Nina Silberman & Mitch Weinstein being named Mitzvah Heroes.

Rhonda B. Goldberg, in honor of Beth Lazar’s birthday and her sermon & poem on January 8, 2022.

Nancy Kern, in memory of father, Irv Kern, husband of Andrea Kern.

Valerie & James Neary, in memory of Dr. Robert Sheiman, husband of Ellen Sheiman.

David & Judith Pressler, in loving memory of Beatrice Pressler, mother of David Pressler; in memory of Cynthia

Farber Stern, aunt of Judith Pressler.

Claire & Allan Shumofsky, a donation.
Paul & Marion Silberman, in honor of Nina Silberman receiving the Federation Mitzvah Hero Award.

Francine “Frankie” Stein, in memory of dear friend, Ruth Madwed.

Jim and Barbara Abraham Education Fund

Nancy Kern, in memory of father, Irv Kern, husband of Andrea Kern.

Charles Fried Keshet Fund

Denise Fried & Family, speedy get well wishes to Serena Sher.

Yakhani Caring Fund

Donations made in memory of Lee Kirsch, mother of Mark Kirsch, were made by:

Michael & Judy Green Blumenthal

Mark & Barbara Edinberg

Ruth & Eric Gross

Mark & Barbara Edinberg, in memory of Jane Rona, mother of Susan Rona Kasson.



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Congregation B'nai Israel, founded in 1858, seeks to be a vibrant Reform synagogue dedicated to the perpetuation of Jewish life and values within the framework of contemporary American Judaism. We are a gateway to Judaism for all. The Congregation B'nai Israel Bulletin publishes monthly 11 times a year (except July). To submit an article, announcement or ad to the Bulletin, please contact Co-Editors, Amy Pressman at apressman@cbibpt.org or Lauren Tropp at ltropp@cbibpt.org. Submissions are due by the first day of the month preceding the publication month. We reserve the right to edit all submissions for length or style.

HIGH HOLY DAY APPEAL DONATIONS

Pillar of the Congregation

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Benefactor of the Congregation

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Nancy and Charles Needle
Shari and Brian Nerreau
Hunter and Annette Norton
Jamie and Karen Sanger

High Holy Day Appeal Contribution

Ann and Mark Block
Steven and Barbara Gersen
Erica Hoffman
Twody and Bob Schless



ONGOING CLASSES
Torah Study
Saturdays,
February 5, 12,
19, and 26 from
9:30 – 10:30 a.m.
on Zoom

The Torah is so many things to so many people: law book, guidebook, moral compass, history, mythology, genealogy, and so much more. Each week we read from the Torah. Each year at Simchat Torah we start over from the beginning. Each time we revisit a portion, we learn something new. Some of us have been learning together for decades. Some of us joined recently. All of us are teaching and learning from one another! Join us as we slowly make our way through the entire Torah! Please see Hashavua to confirm if we are meeting at temple in addition to Zoom as well as for the link.

Talmud with Training Wheels
Monday, February 7, 14, and 28
from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. on Zoom

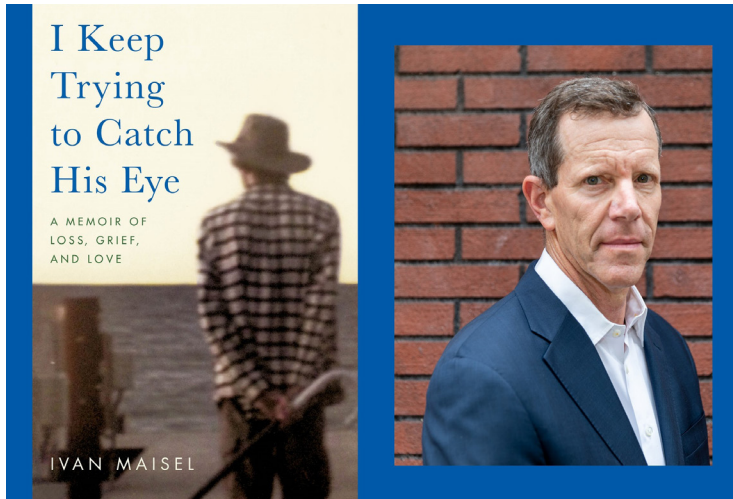
We have a small but loyal band of people exploring how Talmud and other classic Jewish texts can help us make sense of our world today. We don't always agree with them (or even with each other), but we are able to learn and wrestle with the values they teach us. Ira Wise is our guide as the group decides on topics of interest; then he finds us the texts and we dig in. No prior knowledge or political leaning is required, just a sense of adventure and a willingness to have an opinion! Please see Hashavua for Zoom info or email info@cbibpt.org for the link.



Take the Hot Air Zoom Balloon and Visit Jewish South America!
Thursdays, February 3, 10, 17, and 24
at 4:00 p.m. on Zoom

Did you know that the first group of Jews in what became the United States came from Recife, Brazil, in 1654? There is so much to learn about the journeys of the Jewish people in South America. Many of us joined tour guide Dani Rotstein on a virtual tour of Majorca, Spain last year. Since then he has put together a team of guides all around the world who take people on Jewish tours in the comfort of their own homes! This month, they are visiting Uruguay (2/3), Ecuador (2/10), Brazil (Recife) (2/17) and Colombia (2/24). There is a fee for participating. For more information, visit jewishmajorca.com/travel.

BOOK TALK WITH IVAN MAISEL:
I KEEP TRYING TO CATCH HIS EYE



Saturday March 26, 4:00 p.m.
in person at B'nai Israel and on Zoom

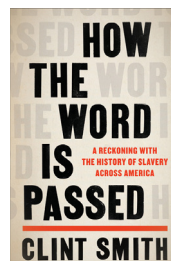
Join with B'nai Israel member Ivan Maisel for an intimate conversation about his recent book, *I Keep Trying to Catch His Eye*. The book is a poignant exploration of a father losing his dear son Max in 2015. Ivan is an incredible writer and speaker as well as a member of our community. Copies of the book can be purchased in the synagogue office for \$30.

CONECT – 2 BOOKS, 2 MOVIES SERIES ON RACISM IN AMERICA

***How the Word is Passed* by Clint Smith**
Tuesday, February 8,
7:00-8:00 p.m. on Zoom

The CONECT Core Team at B'nai Israel is sponsoring a reading and discussion of *How the Word is Passed* by Clint Smith. This is a continuation of the “2 Books, 2 Movies series on Racism in

America,” which has evolved into 4 books and 6 movies since 2017. We'll read *How the Word is Passed* in parts and meet every other month on Zoom. Discussions are open



to anyone in the congregation who reads the next two chapters (“*Angola Prison*” and “*Blandford Cemetery*”). Copies are available in the synagogue library. For Zoom link and more information, write to Jeff Schwartz at jeff.schwartz2991@gmail.com, Co-Chair of CONECT.

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At B'nai Israel we...

- ...TREAT each person in our community as created b'tzelem Elohim, in the image of the divine,
- ...DEVELOP, foster and nurture vibrant and meaningful Jewish lives in accordance with the values of our Torah and sacred texts,
- ...BUILD and deepen sacred relationships both within the synagogue community and the broader Greater Bridgeport community,
- ...ACT justly with a sacred obligation to tikkun olam (repair the world),
- ...FOSTER and deepen a love, commitment and connection to the land and people of Israel.

RABBI MARION FROM P. 5

sayings and messages that help us do everything we can to avoid the pain and circumvent the sadness:

Just wipe your tears – you'll be alright. I have faith in you. You're stronger than you know. Just keep going – one foot at a time. Be strong – you can do this. Keep fighting. And the worst: Boys don't cry. Brush it off...and be a man.

It is no wonder that pharmaceutical companies have profited so much from pain medications, no wonder that opioids have taken such advantage in our society.

Of course, there *are* moments when “it will be alright” is entirely necessary and utterly appropriate. But as easily as “you’ll be alright” slips off our tongue, what if we also learned to say: “Tell me about your pain.” Because sometimes, what we really need is simply the *permission* to cry...and the permission

to just be, in that snow-like stillness of sadness.

A few months ago, during another Covid surge, I found my daughter in her bed, sobbing. “What’s wrong?” I asked. I couldn’t remember any recent scuffle with her brother that would have sent her to her room in tears. “I just want to see my cousins,” she sobbed to me, tears rolling down her cheeks. “And I miss my friends in Baltimore.” In that moment, my heart broke open, too. And it took every ounce of my being not to try to diminish her pain, not to say or offer something that I wasn’t sure that I could make come true.

“I know,” I said. “I wish you could see your cousins too, and I miss our friends in Baltimore, too. I’m so sorry that we can’t see them right now. I wish things were different.” And we sat there together for a little while. And then, she got up and went back to her toys, and I

could hear her happy, giddy voice with her dolls, as if nothing had happened.

And for some reason that I can’t quite pinpoint and can’t quite explain – I started to feel a little bit better, too.

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BIFTY FEBRUARY 2022

It is never too late to join BIFTY! We meet in the BIFTY Lounge on Thursdays from 7:15 — 8:45 p.m. Please come wearing a mask. The best way to stay up to date on our events is to follow us on Instagram @cbi.bifty and to join our text group. Reach out to advisor Marisa Underberger with any questions: munderberger@cbibpt.org.

Our February events will take place on:
February 10: We will be celebrating Harry Styles's Birthday!
February 24: Join us for Wacky Hat Night Part 3! Come wearing your favorite, wackiest hat!

*Please note there is no BIFTY on February 17

We look forward to seeing you at our next event!



BIFTY had fun making latkes for Hanukkah!