

**MAY HIGHLIGHTS**

Rabbi Schultz shares the history of the Reform Jewish ritual of confirmation. Page 3

See photos from this year's wonderful Women's Passover seder. Page 5



Alexa Cohen quotes Educator Emeritus Bob Gillette in a bulletin article from 1975 on how B'nai Israel's religious school has had a legacy of embracing head, heart and hand. Page 6

Learn more about the fight for equity and the history of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Page 11

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**EREV SHAVUOT WITH SPECIAL GUEST DR. ELLEN UMANSKY**



WHAT IT MEANS TO STAND AT SINAI TODAY: LIVING AS A REFORM JEW IN THE 21ST CENTURY

**Thursday, May 25**  
**Shavuot Service 6:00–6:30 p.m.**  
**Potluck Dairy Dinner 6:30–7:30 p.m.**  
**Learning with Dr. Ellen Umansky 7:30–8:30 p.m.**

**Shavuot**  
**Friday, May 25**  
**Yizkor Service 10:00 a.m.**  
**in the Chapel**

Please join us for Erev Shavuot with special guest Dr. Ellen Umansky. Dr. Umansky recently retired after 28 years serving as the director of the Carl and Dorothy Bennett Center for Judaic Studies at Fairfield University. Doctor Umansky is considered a foremost scholar on Jewish feminist history and thought. We hope you'll all join us for this incredible evening of learning!

**JOIN US FOR B'NAI ISRAEL'S FESTIVE GALA!**



*Jim & Lisa Greenberg*



*Michael & Judy Green Blumenthal*

On Saturday, June 10, we will pay special tribute to longtime B'nai Israel members Michael & Judy Green Blumenthal and Jim & Lisa Greenberg. All four have been active and valued contributors to our B'nai Israel community in numerous ways, from serving on committees, to leadership positions on our Board of Trustees, to gladly lending a hand in many different capacities whenever called upon over the years.

We are thrilled to be able to gather together in June in celebration of all that

our honorees have done and continue to do for our congregation. We also hope to raise funds with a special tribute journal being created in their honor. Through the journal, congregants, family, and friends have an opportunity to express appreciation and help ensure our synagogue's continued success. Keep an eye out for your invitations and further information about the ad journal in your mailbox!

Please contact our gala co-chairs, Liz and Mark Nigrosh and Evelyn Rubak, with any questions at: [mrnigrosh@gmail.com](mailto:mrnigrosh@gmail.com), [lizziesmail@aol.com](mailto:lizziesmail@aol.com), or [erubak@gmail.com](mailto:erubak@gmail.com).

With our community's support, we look forward to making this year's event a festive and fitting tribute to our remarkable honorees.

## WELCOME! WELCOME!

A warm welcome to our newest members. We look forward to their participation in our many programs and hope their affiliation will not only enrich their lives, but that of our congregation.

### **Matt & Kristin Bresler and son Mackenzie (Mack)**

Stratford, CT

### **MJ & Lisa Goldberg and sons Aidan & Rylan**

Fairfield, CT

### **Michael & Kristen Davis and sons Liam & Dylan**

Fairfield, CT

## SHARING OUR JOY...

In celebration of:

**Nancy & Jeff Oberman**, on the birth of their grandson Daniel Martin, to parents Melanie Oberman & Ben Winston and sister Emma Rose.

**Jaelyn & Asher Epstein**, on the birth of their daughter Jade Mae, sister to Avery, granddaughter to Mindy & Jeff Siegel, and great-granddaughter to Alice Siegel.

**Sam & Patti Rosenberg**, on the marriage of their daughter Sarah to Elliot Kaufman.

*\*If you would like to list something in Sharing Our Joy, please email the office with any information you would like to share.*

## SINCERE SYMPATHY

We extend our sympathy to the bereaved families of:

**Helen Ross**, mother of David (Debbie) Ross, grandmother of Rachel (Harry) Wolff, great-grandmother of Miles and Evan Wolff.

**Gloria Sheiman**, wife of Richard Sheiman, mother of Rachel Sheiman Cramer, grandmother of Samantha and Jack Cramer.

**Nancy Owens**, sister of Carol Barsky.

**William Newman**, father of Michael (Jessica) Newman, grandfather of Ella and Ava Newman.

## BULLETIN BOARD

### MITZVAH MORNINGS

May 21, 2023, 10:00 a.m.



Our May Mitzvah Morning event is bound to be fun and exciting. For the first time ever, Mitzvah Morning will be teaming up with the B'nai Israel Green Team for a community event.

We will be meeting at 10 a.m. at B'nai Israel and will work together to plant native shrubs, flowers, and bushes on the temple grounds. The goal is two-fold: to make the physical grounds of our synagogue more beautiful and appealing and to further develop the Pollinator Pathway in the Bridgeport area.

Why are Pollinator Pathways important? Pollinators (birds and insects) are critical to the natural ecosystem as they are vital to plant reproduction and play a very important role in maintaining biodiversity. Pollinators have been threatened in recent years due to overdevelopment of land and heavy use of pesticides and herbicides by homeowners and municipalities. Building and maintaining

Pollinator Pathways will help ensure the health and safety of our local pollinators.

What can you do? You can do your part in keeping our ecosystem healthy and vibrant by attending May Mitzvah Morning! You will help feed the pollinators, and you will also learn a lot about the natural world that exists (literally) in our backyards.

If you have garden gloves and garden shovels, feel free to bring them. All ages are welcome.

We hope to see you there!

For more information, please reach out to Nina Silberman ([ninahv@aol.com](mailto:ninahv@aol.com)) or Mitch Weinstein ([mitchellew@yahoo.com](mailto:mitchellew@yahoo.com)).

June 11, 2023, 10:30 a.m.

For our June Mitzvah Morning Project, we will be working with Camp HOPE, a program managed by the Center for Family Justice ([www.centerforfamilyjustice.org](http://www.centerforfamilyjustice.org)). Camp HOPE is a summer camp specifically for children from Fairfield County who are victims of domestic abuse. The camp provides a clinically proven program designed to help these children overcome trauma in order to lead more hopeful and resilient lives. For two weeks during August, Camp HOPE campers will spend

time at Camp Hi-Rock in the Berkshires enjoying activities in the outdoors while receiving critical counseling and therapeutic services.

On June 11 at 10:30 a.m., we will meet at B'nai Israel to help pack trunks for the campers. Many of the campers are lacking the essential items they will need for their time away, so we are looking for B'nai Israel volunteers to help provide them. Some supplies we are looking for include backpacks, batteries, flashlights, fleece blankets, water bottles, laundry bags, and pillowcases.

Volunteers can bring these items to Mitzvah Morning or are welcome to drop them off in the B'nai Israel lobby the week before the event. In addition, there is an Amazon Wishlist which will be published in our email communications. Any items purchased on the Amazon wishlist will be delivered directly to B'nai Israel. Gently used items are welcome as well.

For any additional questions, contact Nina Silberman at [ninahv@aol.com](mailto:ninahv@aol.com) or Mitch Weinstein at [mitchellew@yahoo.com](mailto:mitchellew@yahoo.com). We look forward to seeing you.



## FROM THE RABBI'S DESK/RABBI EVAN SCHULTZ CELEBRATING CONFIRMATION

I would imagine that at one point or another, as you've walked through the synagogue hallways, you've paused to take in the photos that adorn the walls connecting the main lobby to the Education Center. Some of you may be in those photos or have parents, siblings, or children in those photos. Or perhaps you've stopped to remark on the changes in hairstyles over the decades or the ways in which our sanctuary has shifted through the years. Those photos tell the proud B'nai Israel history of confirmation, a year-long course for our tenth graders that culminates in a community-wide service each May.

According to an article on [reformjudaism.org](http://reformjudaism.org):

Most scholars attribute the creation of confirmation to Israel Jacobson, a wealthy German businessman and a nominal "founder" of Reform Judaism. In 1810, expending more than \$100,000 of his own money, Jacobson built a new synagogue in Seesen, Germany. He introduced a number of then radical reforms, including the use of an organ and mixed gender seating. Jacobson felt that bar mitzvah was an outmoded ceremony.

Accordingly, when five 13-year-old boys were about to graduate from the school he maintained, Jacobson designed a new graduation ceremony, held in the school rather than the synagogue. In this manner, confirmation came into being.

At its inception, confirmation reflected a graduation motif. After a specified period of study, students were subject to a public examination. The following day, in the rabbi's presence, students uttered personal confessions of faith. The rabbi addressed the class, recited a prayer, and then blessed them. It was a simple service with no fixed ritual. As confirmation moved into the synagogue and as its ties to Shavuot strengthened, the ceremony became more elaborate.

The first recorded confirmation in North America was held at New York's Anshe Chesed Congregation in 1846. Two years later, New York's Congregation Emanu-El adopted confirmation. The ceremony grew in popularity, and in 1927, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the professional organization of North America's Reform rabbis, recommended confirmation as a movement-wide practice.

Fast-forward to 2023, and I am thrilled that we are planning to confirm ten incredible teens on May 21. Each week on Tuesday nights, we meet in my study to discuss current events, Jewish identity, or the weekly joys and challenges of being a Jewish teenager in Fairfield County. The students have fostered wonderful friendships with one another, strengthened by our four-day trip to Washington, DC, this past winter. They had an opportunity to join with over 300 teenagers from around the country to learn about the justice work of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC) and lobby on Capitol Hill about the issues they and our Jewish tradition care about most.

I hope you'll consider joining our confirmation service on May 21 at 2:00 p.m. at B'nai Israel. It is a ceremony that is open to the entire community. The students craft and prepare the service themselves, and each year I find it is an incredible showcase of Jewish thought, music, and ideas through the voices of our teenagers, honoring this important milestone in their Jewish journeys.

### **AARP Driving Class with Ernie Malecki**

Please join our congregant Ernest "Ernie" Malecki on Wednesday, May 10 from 9:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. for this one-day class designed by AARP for senior drivers. Passing this course can save you money on your car insurance. Please pre-register with Ernie by emailing [enmalecki113@gmail.com](mailto:enmalecki113@gmail.com) or call the temple office if you do not have access to email. The cost is \$20 for AARP members and \$25 for non-members (checks payable to AARP). A future course will be offered on Wednesday, June 7.

# Congratulations to our Confirmation Class of 2023

We are thrilled to be able to join together on Sunday, May 21 at 2:00 p.m. for our Confirmation Service

Sarah Ballas

Daniella Berry

Sara Dankenbrink

Seth Goldstein

Patricia Greene

Olivia Kahn

Sacha Kerner

Alexandra Mantell

Samantha Portnay

Alexander Renzulli

## Congratulations to the Merkaz Graduating Class of 2023

Mazel Tov to Our B'nai Israel Students!

Aaron Dressler      Jonah Rosenbaum

The 2023 Merkaz Graduation will be held at Jewish Senior Services on Sunday, June 4, 2023



**ISRAEL @ 75 FAMILY CELEBRATION**  
*Israeli Food, Music and Fun*  
**June 4**  
held at  
B'nai Israel  
4200 Park Avenue  
Bridgeport



featuring a musical concert with the Israel Scouts Caravan on their US tour

Doors Open at 12:30  
Concert Starts at 2:00

To Register, go to  
<https://jewishphilanthropyofcalcalab.org/israelat75special>



**75**  
Celebrate Israel



JEWISH FEDERATION  
OF GREATER FAIRFIELD COUNTY



# FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY/RABBI SARAH R. MARION PHOTOS FROM THE WOMEN'S PASSOVER SEDER

On Sunday, March 26, 150 women and girls from across our community joined together for our annual Women's Seder. It was a wonderful intergenerational celebration and we are grateful to our many leaders and volunteers who made this event so meaningful and special.





ALEXA COHEN/DIRECTOR OF THE EDUCATION CENTER  
 THE THREE “H’S” — HEAD, HEART AND HAND



This morning an interesting artifact came across my desk, a bulletin from the Park Avenue Temple — Congregation B’nai Israel from November 1975. This is way before some of you were born (I was a toddler). It seems as though one of the Bonim Preschool families (whose children have since graduated) found this bulletin hidden in their newly purchased home as they were getting the house ready for some renovations. One of the previous owners must have been a member of the temple and tucked away this artifact (knowingly or unknowingly). The bulletin was in great shape for its age. Not yellow or torn, so surprising!

As I began to read through the pages, I saw the typical Shabbat Service time announcements (Friday night services began at 8:15 p.m.), upcoming events (a board meeting at 11:30 a.m. on a Wednesday morning!), and donations to the scholarship and discretionary funds. However, the part of the bulletin I found most interesting was an article written by then principal of the religious school, Bob Gillette, entitled “The Three H’s.” Below is a sample —

Our Jewish tradition has long grasped the three-fold imperatives of any lasting learning; the student must experience the ‘subject matter’ through the **Head**, the **Heart** and the **Hand**. The three pillars of good teaching are also the

foundation blocks of our religion. Intellectual pursuits are sterile if not integrated into our affective or feeling level; emotional and intellectual responses are not sufficient — personal action (responsibility) is mandated by Torah and our long experience.

The curriculum of our Religious School strives to incorporate the three ‘H’s.’ We endeavor to create a warm and caring atmosphere; we make reasonable academic demands, and we always try to build in an activity component. Involvement is our goal for students as well as for their parents. The opening of school this year was a class session for parents only. We will repeat this successful communication and sharing mid-year. There have been more parents helping and visiting than ever before. This is a good sign.

I feel confident that Jewish learning ‘is alive and well and living’ at B’nai Israel.

Such wise words from almost 50 years ago. Today at Kehilah, we continue to strive to make sure the students experience the curriculum through the “Three H’s”— their study of the Hebrew language through hands on learning (sensory experiences like playdough

and sand) and visual *t’filah* engages their heads and their hands. The weekly collection of *tzedakah* in their classrooms and their experiences during Mitzvah Mornings and Keif programs that support those in our community who are in need engages their hearts and hands. We have worked this year to increase the parent involvement and sense of community by getting parents involved in greeting during special programs, providing snacks and breakfasts for grade level events, and hosting a few “Coffee Schmoozes” throughout the year. The Parent Committee has worked hard to re-energize the Room Parent Program and had tasked each room parent pair to host two grade level gatherings during the Kehilah year. Some favorites have been bowling, pizza, trampoline parties and more.

I have to echo Bob Gillette when he proclaimed, “Jewish learning is alive and well and living at B’nai Israel”.

As I end my first year as interim director of education at B’nai Israel, I am certain we have not solved all the problems, but we are well on our way. We look forward to hiring a “principal” — (Assistant Director) for Kehilah in the coming weeks, and that person and I will spend the summer planning and learning together.

Please let us know if you are not receiving emails from B’nai Israel.  
 If you have not been receiving email correspondence, please call our office at 203-336-1858.

# SNAPSHOTS FROM BONIM AND KEHILAH



*Jonah Making Charoset*



*Daisy Decorates Her Elijah Cup*



*Fort Jason*



*Levi Cutting Celery*



*6th grade shopping for food for the mobile food pantry*



*Taxi Service*



*3rd grade stocking the truck*



*1st grade learning how the truck works*



*JFS Mobile Pantry*

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# MAY DONATIONS

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

**Rabbi Schultz Discretionary Fund**  
**David Abbey & Deborah Goodman**, in memory of Irving Abbey.

**Bernie & Janice Jacobs**, in memory of Mary Jacobs; in memory of Sally Rosenblum.

**Alyse & Seth Kadushin**, a donation.

**Marlene Nadeau**, in memory of Elvin Francis.

**Hillary & David Ortiz**, in memory of Arlene Feldman, mother of Hillary Ortiz.

**Cleo & Jonathan Sonneborn**, in memory of Ilona Guman, mother of Chris Rocha.

**Stephen & Ellen Tower**, congratulations to Sylvia and Alan Neigher on the birth of granddaughter Marni Charlotte Kaplan.

**Rabbi Marion Discretionary Fund**  
**Jack & Sandy Germain**, in memory of Carol Korb, sister of Howard Levinson; in memory of Gloria Sheiman, wife of Richard Sheiman.

**Beth Lazar**, in great appreciation of the Women's Seder. Happy Spring!

**Ivan Maisel & Meg Murray**, in appreciation to Rabbi Marion for her thoughtfulness during the Shiva for my mother, Freida Maisel.

**Samuel Miller**, in memory of Gloria Sheiman.

**Marlene Nadeau**, in memory of Roanne Marglies, in memory of Elvin Francis.

**Hillary & David Ortiz**, in memory of Arlene Feldman, mother of Hillary Ortiz.

**Barbara P. Rifkin**, in appreciation to Rabbi Marion for the Women's Seder.

**Cleo & Jonathan Sonneborn**, in memory of Susan Baris Mace, cousin of Bari Dworken; in memory of Hannah Hofheimer.

**Rabbi James Prosnit Legacy Fund**  
**Andrea Goodman & Jeff Ackerman**, in honor of the marriage of Patti & Sam Rosenberg's daughter, Sarah.

**Serena & Arnie Sher**, in memory of Frieda Maisel, mother of Ivan Maisel.

**Rabbi James Prosnit Discretionary Fund**

**Sam & Patti Rosenberg**, in appreciation to Rabbi Prosnit for participating in the wedding of Sarah & Elliot Kaufman.

**William L Smith**, in memory of mother-in-law, Helen Rubak; in memory of Rose Smith, mother of Lorraine Smith.

**Ken West**, in honor of my marriage to Sheryle Levine, officiated by Rabbi Prosnit.

**Music Fund**

**Laura & Bruce Braverman**, in memory of Chris Rocha's mother, Ilona Guman.

**Susan & Richard Preminger**, in honor of Cantor Scott Harris.

**Jonathan & Nancy Rosenthal**, in memory of Freida Maisel, mother of Ivan Maisel and Meg Murray; in memory of Helen Ross, mother of David and Debbie Ross.

**Dale & Jerry Demner**, in loving memory of Irving Jacob Demner, father of Jerry Demner; in loving memory of Morris Hirsch, brother-in-law of Jerry Demner; in loving memory of Joseph Greenfield, father of Dale Demner; in loving memory of Ted Slive, uncle of Dale Demner; in loving memory of Anna and David Slive, grandparents of Dale Demner.

**Anne & Mark Kirsch**, in honor of the marriage of Ken West and Sheryle Levine.

**Steven & Julia Pressman**, in memory of Gloria Sheiman.

**Jerry Saunders & Elaine Appellof**, in memory of Allan Shumofsky, husband of Claire Shumofsky.

**Judith Brav Sher Family Education Fund**

**Neil & Joanne Lippman**, in celebration of the birth of Lori and Dan Underberger's first grandchild, Jace

Henry Levitt.

**Bonim Preschool Enrichment Fund**  
**Gale & Paul Antell**, in honor of the marriage of Ken and Sheryle West.  
**Anne & Mark Kirsch**, in memory of Helen Ross, mother of David Ross.  
**Neil & Joanne Lippman**, Mazel tov to Jaclyn, Asher, Avery, Mindy, and Jeff on the birth of Jade Mae.

**Prayer Book Fund**

**Ellen, David & Rebecca Sheiman**, in loving memory of our cousin, Gloria Sheiman.

**Slepian Floral Fund**

**Susan & Robert Rosenblitt**, in loving memory of beloved father of Susan Rosenblitt, Harry Weintraub; may your memory live on through eternity!

**Rabbi Martin Library Fund**

**Gloria Katz**, in memory of Nancy Owens, sister of Carol Barsky.

**Rabbi Arnold Sher Social Action Fund**

**Michael & Judy Blumenthal**, in memory of Freida Maisel, mother of Ivan Maisel.

**Steven & Jill Elbaum**, Mazel tov to Lori & Dan Underberger on the birth of their grandchild.

**Karen & Kenneth Ferleger**, in memory of Frieda Maisel, mother of Ivan Maisel.

**Sherry Fogel**, in memory of David Ross' beloved mother, may her memory serve as a blessing.

**Anne & Mark Kirsch**, in memory of Freida Maisel, mother of Ivan Maisel.

**Samuel Miller & Family**, in memory of Jennie Kot.

**Jerry Saunders & Elaine Appellof**, in memory of Freida Maisel, mother of Ivan Maisel.

**Cleo Sonneborn**, In loving memory of my sister, Shirley.



# MAY DONATIONS

(CONTINUED)

**Jim and Barbara Abraham**  
**Education Fund**

**Don & Wendy Hyman**, in memory of Donna Ulman, wife of our friend Howard.

**Gillette Judaic Enrichment Fund**  
**Joan & Alan Newman**, in memory of Carol Korb, sister of Howard Levinson.

**Charles Fried Keshet Fund**  
**Joni & Michael Greenspan**, wishing a very happy birthday to Denise Fried.

**Yakhani Caring Fund**  
**Mark & Barbara Edinberg** in celebration of the birth of Sylvia & Alan Neigher's granddaughter Marni Charlotte Kaplan, to parents Leslie Neigher and Greg Kaplan.



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The Bulletin of Congregation B'nai Israel is published every month except July.

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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](mailto:apressman@cbibpt.org) or Lauren Tropp at [ltropp@cbibpt.org](mailto: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.

## B'nai Israel Presents: Parent Book Club

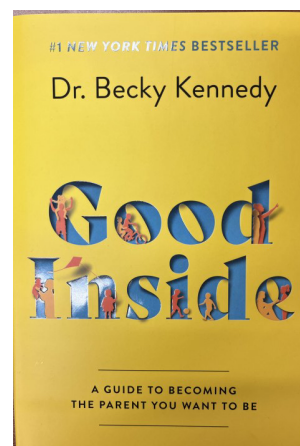
**May 10 – 6:30 p.m.**

**Dr. Becky Kennedy, Clinical Psychologist**  
**#1 New York Times Bestseller**

### **GOOD INSIDE**

**A guide to becoming the parent you want to be**

**We are very excited to bring this to our community**  
**The book club is open to all**



Please email [RROSLER@CBIBPT.ORG](mailto:RROSLER@CBIBPT.ORG) to order a copy and to reserve your spot.

Cost for book \$20.00 — wine and pizza will be served

## MAY EVENTS

### Senior Noon Lunch Talks (Chat & Chew)

Tuesday, May 23 — Led by Barbara Edinberg: Update on CT Legislative Session with emphasis on voting and reproductive rights

### Was Michelangelo a Kabbalist?

Michelangelo's frescoes of Genesis on the Sistine Chapel ceiling, including *The Creation of Adam*, are probably the most famous paintings in the Western World. The ceiling also contains seven Old Testament prophets



and all the Jewish "ancestors of Christ." Surprisingly, several scholars believe his works were influenced by exposure to Kabbalah, either in the

circle of Lorenzo de Medici as a young man or later on in humanistic circles of papal Rome. Come hear an illustrated lunchtime talk on Tuesday, June 13 at noon by congregation member Marcie Slepian, who has been teaching Renaissance art for the last forty years and just found out about this.

Marcie holds an A.B. in Art from Brown University and a Ph.D. in the History of Art from Yale University. She frequently teaches art history at the Bigelow Center.

### Tile, Shuffle and Socialize at Our Rescheduled Rosh Chodesh Game Night!

Monday, May 15, 7:00–9:30 p.m.

Game night is back! Join with women from across the B'nai Israel community for an evening of Mah Jong, Canasta, and socializing. It's a night for everyone, whether you know how to play the games or not. There will be tables for players with experience and tables for those who want to learn how to play... and if you just want to come and socialize, that's ok too! Snacks and beverages will be provided.

To participate in Game Night, all players must pre-register. Watch your email for a registration link. If you signed up for the February Game Night that got canceled due to snow, please be sure to re-register, using the new link that will be sent out via email.

Games of Mah Jong and Canasta will be offered. On your registration, please choose to play either Mah Jong OR Canasta (not both!).

Please note that game tables will be arranged in advance by event organizers in order to facilitate congregational community building and a smooth flow to the evening.

For questions, please contact Game Night co-chairs, Amy Moorin at amoorin@optonline.net or Carol Lubin at crlubz@gmail.com.



### Summer Shabbat Dates — this year at Jennings Beach Marina!

We're switching it up a bit this year and will hold three outdoor Shabbat services at Jennings Beach Marina. The services will be on **June 16**, **July 21**, and **August 11** from 6–7 p.m. Please access through the marina lot (see photo). Tell the guard that you are attending religious services, and they will give you a pass for your dashboard. We will meet just past the boats near the marina. Please note that musical instruments will not be amplified but we will have a portable microphone. Please bring your own chairs, blankets, and Shabbat dinners. We're excited to enjoy Shabbat on Long Island Sound this year!

# A COLORFUL HISTORY OF THE ADA AND JUDY HEUMANN

By Chair of B'nai Israel's Mental Health Group Beth Lazar

The history of disabilities rights activist Judy Heumann and the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is replete with takeovers of Federal Buildings, the Black Panthers, and a special place called "Crip Camp."

Camp Jened, affectionately known as "Crip Camp" by staff and campers, was a camp staffed by beatniks for teens with disabilities. The camp was run by consensus and democratic principles. Each staff member and camper had one vote; as a group, they fully discussed and decided on the issues related to the daily running of the camp. Campers and staff alike contributed to the duties and tasks involved in the daily functioning of the camp, following the principle from each according to their ability, to each according to their need.

One of the campers was Judith (Judy) Ellen Heumann, born December 18, 1947. Judy lost the ability to walk at age two due to polio. She attended Crip Camp in the 1950s. It was this experience of being treated in a nondiscriminatory, egalitarian fashion and meeting disabled peers from around the country that was the catalyst for Judy to live independently, fight discrimination, and lead the Disabilities Rights Movement.

In 1977, Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act had still not been signed and could not be implemented. Section 504 outlaws discrimination against any disabled person by any

institution, such as public schools, universities, and hospitals, receiving federal funds. Judy knew that Section 504 would be an important tool in fighting discrimination, because it provided a remedy: if discrimination happened, one could file a complaint or go to court. Signing it was four years overdue.

Judy activated her network of disabled friends whom she had met at Crip Camp to take to the streets, stop traffic, and take over Federal buildings if Section 504 was not signed by April 4, 1977. April 4 came and went. On April 5, there were demonstrations by disabled people in major cities across the nation. They were joined by Vietnam veterans against the war (VVAW), because many of them had lost limbs or had mental health problems due to the war. In most cities, it was a one-day protest, but in San Francisco, Judy led one hundred disabled people in taking over the fourth floor of the Federal Building for a month.

This remains the longest takeover of a Federal building in U.S. history. It was before buildings had to be handicap accessible — that's what they were fighting for. The protesters had to crawl up the stairs dragging their wheelchairs. The governor of California cut the water and phone lines to the building. In 1977, there was no internet, smart phones, Facebook, email, or Twitter. Landline telephone and snail mail were the major forms of communication.

The Black Panthers brought the protestors cooked meals and water because the protestors were fighting against discrimination and for equality just like they were. The Mayor of San Francisco supported the protestors and shipped mattresses to the building so that the protestors did not have to sleep on the floor. The U.S. Government finally saw the light, and on April 28, 1977, signed Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act into law, paving the way for the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The ADA broadens protections to include the private sector.

I am proud that Judy Heumann, disabilities rights leader and author of the book *Being Heumann*, who served as assistant secretary of the U.S. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services from 1993 through 2001, was Jewish. Both of her parents, Werner and Ilse Heumann, were sent away from Nazi Germany as Jewish children. Neither of them saw their parents again. Judy Heumann joined her ancestors on Saturday, March 4, 2023, at age 75.

Rest in peace, dear Judy, disabilities rights activist and warrior for freedom and justice. Be secure in the knowledge that through the ADA, your legacy lives on!

## Join our Israel Team!

We are convening a new committee to increase awareness and synagogue programming around Israel. Please let us know if you are interested in joining! You can email Abby Leviss (aleviss@cbibpt) or Rabbi Schultz (eschultz@cbibpt.org) to let us know you'd like to join. First meeting date TBA. All are welcome to attend!

## Request for Help for Fellow Congregants from the Chesed Committee

We are still in urgent need of volunteers to help members of our congregation. We are seeking assistance with items that are not long-term commitments, just small things like providing a ride, delivering a meal, or making a phone call. We would so appreciate volunteers to add to our list. Please email Jim at jamesgrutz@gmail.com if you can spare some time. Each little mitzvah can mean so much to someone in need.

Thank you,  
Sara and Jim Grutzmacher

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## 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, May 5

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom  
Torah Portion – Emor,  
Leviticus 21:1-24:23  
Haftarah – Ezekiel 44:15-31

### Saturday, May 6

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom  
9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast – in person  
9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person and on Zoom  
11:00 a.m. Bat Mitzvah of Zoe Kostbar, daughter of Jodi Sacks

### Friday, May 12

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom  
Torah Portion – Behar-  
Bechukotai, Leviticus 25:1-  
27:34  
Haftarah – Jeremiah 16:19-  
17:14

### Saturday, May 13

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom  
9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast – in person  
9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person and on Zoom  
11:00 a.m. Bar Mitzvah of Nathaniel Blair, son of Francis & Sarah Blair

### Friday, May 19

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom  
Torah Portion – Bamidbar,  
Numbers 1:1-4:20  
Haftarah – Hosea 2:1-22

### Saturday, May 20

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom  
9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast – in person  
9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person and on Zoom  
11:00 a.m. Bar Mitzvah of Matthew Serlin, son of Ethan & Pamela Serlin

### Friday, May 26

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom  
Torah Portion – Sheni Shel Shavu'ot, Deuteronomy 14:22-16:17  
Haftarah – Habakkuk 2:20-3:19

### Saturday, May 27

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom  
9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast – in person  
9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person and on Zoom  
11:00 a.m. Bar Mitzvah of Jayden Helman, son of Michael Helman

## GREEN TEAM



The Congregation B'nai Israel Green Team will be hosting its second clothing swap on Tuesday, May 23 from 7:00–8:00 p.m. in the pavilion. Any clothing (new or gently used, please) will be accepted — all ages, all genders, all sizes. Clean out your closets and enjoy an evening of lively conversation! Leftover clothing will

be donated to a local charitable organization.

Please reach out to Laura Stern at [LauraAStern@gmail.com](mailto:LauraAStern@gmail.com) with any questions.

### American Red Cross

#### Blood Drive

**Wednesday, May 3,**

**1:00 – 6:00 p.m.**

Schedule your appointment

by calling the Red Cross at

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[www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org).

Walk-ins are also welcome.



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**BIFTY**  
**MAY**  
**2023**

BIFTY is excited for our final programs of the year! We meet on Thursdays from 7:00–8:30 p.m. in the BIFTY lounge. To keep up to date with our events, follow us on Instagram @cbi.bifty and ask to join our text group. Reach out to advisor Marisa at [munderberger@gmail.com](mailto:munderberger@gmail.com) with any questions. We look forward to seeing you!

Our upcoming events are:

May 11—Bring your artistic talents to Bob Ross Paint Night.

May 18—Celebrate our seniors as their time at BIFTY comes to an end

June 1—Meet us at the Trumbull Mall for our annual mall hunt and last event of the year! The time for this event will be earlier, so stay tuned for updates.