One of the great beauties and treasures within our religious tradition is the diversity and depth of Jewish literature and teachings. In each milieu, Judaism has been enhanced and influenced by thinkers and teachers who cared deeply about strengthening our faith by meeting the needs and cares of each generation. As modern scholars we know that the Torah was not written in one sitting, dictated by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. Rather, it is a tapestry of teachings and traditions representing multiple voices within the ancient Israelite society and helping to unite a people with a moral and holy approach to living. The early rabbis in the Talmud preserved a tradition of discussion challenging Jewish thought and law in the hope of honoring their great teachers and sages, giving rise to the idea that complex questions usually have more than one correct answer. And, when we take into context the vast trove of Jewish literature from Babylonian exile to modern times, we are able to explore prayer, poetry, Jewish law, and Midrash giving narrative to a people in search of a meaningful and sacred relationship with the Divine.

No human being can internalize the infinite amount of information that our tradition has historically preserved. And, in my view, that is part of the beauty. Judaism clearly

HAPPY HANUKKAH!

The festival of lights begins on the evening of Sunday, December 6.

JEWISH RENAISSANCE

by Rabbi Jesse Gallop
teaches that we are to continuously learn, rerolling the Torah back to the beginning, and infusing our life experiences within our interpretation of stories, laws, and teachings of the text. And even if we are to master that one task, we are reminded that our modern knowledge of Biblical Hebrew is limited. Therefore, even if we are to learn everything humanly possible, we are still mere mortals whose brilliance can never fully explain or comprehend God’s will, knowledge and being. This humbling thought is what makes Judaism so beautiful.

By studying, discussing, reflecting, and arguing, we grow—learning about what it means to have a life that is aware, humble, and whose purpose is focused on God and community. Rabbi Hillel said to the heathen, “Do not do to others that you would not want done to you. This is the Torah. Now go learn it!” This teaching means a life of study. As humans we have never been able to fully understand ourselves, be it through biology, physics, psychology, or any other form of study. This instruction challenges us to think about how our lives intertwine and are interdependent with every life we encounter. And yet, living seems so busy and overwhelming, where we overlook the divine gifts around us.

In the 21st century, where we want three-sentence answers, Judaism challenges us to think bigger and to be smarter. For humanity is not supposed to master this world, rather we are to truly live in it. By loving people, discovering our inner thoughts and ideas, and by learning how to be forgiving and accepting in life, we begin to realize that each moment can be timeless and profound, helping our soul connect to the Eternal Source of Being. And it is when we can just be ourselves, bringing to fruition God’s gifts from within, that we realize that each and every day is a blessing. There are no self-helps or simple answers. Rather it is not what we do with our time and energy; it is how we do it! And exploring “the how” begins by both learning and living our beautiful heritage.

### CHARACTER

**by Russell Finer, FSA**

“I would have all young persons taught to respect themselves, their citizenship, the rights of others and all sacred things; to be healthy, industrious, persevering, provident, courteous, just and honest; neat in person and in habit, clean in thought and in speech; modest in manner, cheerful in spirit and Masters of themselves, faithful to every trust, loyal to every duty; magnanimous in judgment, generous in service and sympathetic toward the needy and unfortunate; for these are the most important things in life and this is not only the way of wisdom, happiness and true success, but the way to make the most of themselves and to be of the greatest service to the world.”

~ Albert N. Parlin

This short piece, etched onto the wall of my junior high school, has been my guiding principle for the past fifty years. It has helped me succeed in school, in athletics, in my personal life, in civic and social settings, and in life in general. I think it is important for all of us to have something of value to which to ascribe. As you head into the New Year, I wish you success in all your endeavors.

~ Russ
Five Days... Continues on Page 8

By Katie Roeper, President

Five days; Five thousand Jews; Hundreds of workshops; one amazing Shabbat! That is the framework for the Biennial, an international conference hosted every two years by the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), held in conjunction with the Women of Reform Judaism’s convention.

Benefits of the Biennial:
In November, I attended the Biennial along with other lay and professional leaders and clergy from Beth Ahabah – 13 of us in all. This year, my 8th Biennial in 16 years, was held in Orlando – each one providing unique opportunities to learn from top leaders of the Reform Movement – trends in worship, membership, Temple operations, communications, leadership development, staffing, music, education, and so much more.

Our attendance also provides Beth Ahabah the opportunity to weigh-in on resolutions such as the new dues structure for congregational membership to the Union. We also voted on social justice issues like transgender inclusivity, which passed unanimously, making news across the country.

It also provides a venue for discussing common challenges with congregational leaders of other Temples – a platform to learn from one another. With universal challenges such as outreach to millennials and shrinking resources, experts are available to share what’s working and what’s not.

All ages are represented, from high school NFTYites to Hillel college students from campuses across North America; young families with babies to seasoned leaders who have seen decades of change in their congregations.

Something for Everyone:
This Biennial offered four self-selected learning tracks:

Strengthening Congregations: addressing issues related to synagogue life including visioning, finances, leadership development, systems, and transitions.

Audacious Hospitality: exploring cultural competencies and inclusivity practices, especially for individuals and families with special needs, youth, LGBTQ, and interfaith members.

Tikkun Olam: focusing on social justice campaigns with legislative, policy, and programmatic impacts for synagogues, communities and the world.

Transforming Texts: offering lectures and discussion groups facilitated by top scholars from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and the Reform Movement.

The Best of the Best: What happens when you bring together Rabbinic leaders like: Rick Jacobs, President of the URJ; David Saperstein, U.S. Ambassador for International Religious Freedom; Jonah Pesner, Director of the North American Religious Action Center; Danny Freiender, President of the World Union for Progressive Judaism; and Aaron Panken, President of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion...And then add: Vice President Joe Biden; Stav Shaffir, Member of the Knesset; and Paul Fishman, U.S. Attorney...And how about authors such as Nicholas Kristof, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, Anita Diamant, Ron Wolfson, and Larry +

by Rabbi Jesse Gallop

“IT IS NOT INCUMBENT UPON YOU TO COMPLETE THE WORK, BUT NEITHER ARE YOU AT LIBERTY TO DESIST FROM IT” (Pirkei Avot 2:21). THAT IS HOW I CAN BEST DESCRIBE MY EXPERIENCE PARTICIPATING IN THE NAACP’S AMERICA’S JOURNEY FOR JUSTICE. I HAD TWO CONTRADICTING CONCERNS 1) “HOW CAN I HELP IMPROVE THE WORLD?” AND 2) “WILL MY ACTIONS MAKE A DIFFERENCE?” AS I MARCHED WITH THE TORAH, I FELT THAT DILEMMA IN MY HEART. I KNOW THAT NO ONE ACTION MAKES CHANGE, AND YET THERE IS A GREAT NEED TO IMPROVE OUR SOCIETY. IT TRULY BREAKS MY HEART THAT BECAUSE OF SKIN COLOR, OUR NATION HAS DONE SOME HORRIBLE THINGS. AND AS A RESULT THERE ARE SCHOOLS THAT ARE DEPLORABLE, LAWS THAT ARE UNFAIR, AND JUSTICE THAT IS INVISIBLE. THEREFORE, BY MARCHING WITH OTHERS, BRINGING A MESSAGE ACROSS THE NATION ONE STEP AT A TIME, BROUGHT AWARENESS TO A PROBLEM MOST AMERICANS WOULD RATHER AVOID. I MARCHED SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH STARTING MY JOURNEY IN SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY AND ENDING IN THE CITY OF FREDERICKSBURG. CHANTING, SINGING, AND CHEERING ABOUT A BRIGHTER FUTURE, ACKNOWLEDGING THE BEAUTY OF DIVERSITY, AND GIVING VOICE TO THE UNSERVED. AT TIMES IT WAS AWKWARD AND UNCOMFORTABLE, BUT OVERALL IT MOSTLY WAS BEAUTIFUL. THAT DAY OF THE WALK UNFORTUNATELY ENDED EARLY BECAUSE A 68-YEAR-OLD MEMBER OF THE GROUP, WHO HAD STARTED MARCHING SINCE SELMA, ALABAMA, DIED OF A HEART ATTACK WHILE CARRYING THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES. HIS NAME WAS MIDDLE PASSAGE, AND HIS 922 MILES MARCHED SADLY REMINDED US THAT OUR WORK IS NEVER DONE. HE ONLY HAD ROUGHLY 20 MILES OF MARCHING TO GO, AND HAD EVEN BOUGHT HIS PLANE TICKET HOME TO COLORADO. LIFE IS SACRED AND SHORT, THEREFORE MIDDLE PASSAGE AND THE EXPERIENCE WITH THE NAACP REMINDS ME TO KEEP MARCHING, EVEN IF THESE ACTIONS DO NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM. IF EACH OF US NEVER GIVES UP, JUST THINK ABOUT WHAT A WONDERFUL AND HOLY WORLD IT WOULD BE!

WOMEN OF REFORM JUDAISM

News from WRJ

Oldest Jewish Women’s Religious Organization Broadens Reach, Advocates For Pay Equity and Paid Leave at Biennial Convention

Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ)’s 50th Assembly united Reform/Progressive women from across North America and around the world who came together to learn best practices, make decisions about the organization’s future, worship together, and connect with other leaders within the Movement.

The WRJ’s 50th Assembly, a biennial tradition since WRJ’s founding in 1913, took place Nov. 4-8, 2015 at the Marriott’s Orlando World Center in Orlando, FL and had more than 500 women from across the U.S., Canada, Israel, Spain, Guatemala, Brazil, and Argentina.

“WRJ’s Golden Assembly was truly a one-of-a-kind experience for the WRJ Board members and alumnae, WRJ District and sisterhood leaders, and sisterhood members,” said WRJ President Blair C. Marks. “In continuing the WRJ tradition of excellent conferences, our participants were able to learn new skills and share ideas, celebrate Shabbat with worship and song, form new bonds and reconnect with old friends, and leave feeling inspired as they return to their sisterhoods and Jewish communities.”

In a landmark decision, the WRI delegates voted to expand WRJ’s membership beyond affiliated sisterhoods to include individual women who identify with its values and objectives. Additionally, the conference focused on the WRJ Pay Equity initiative, featuring 2015 WRJ Jane Evans “Pursuit of Justice” Award recipient Lilly Ledbetter and a resolution to mobilize its sisterhoods to work toward pay equity. Delegates also passed resolutions advocating for paid family and medical leave policies.

Women of Reform Judaism continues on Page 15
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR CARITAS:
by Chuck Greenberg

Beth Ahabah will again serve as an intake site for the CARITAS Program for the homeless. CARITAS stands for Congregations Around Richmond Involved To Assure Shelter. From Saturday, December 20, 2015 through Friday, February 12, 2016, persons seeking shelter for the night will come to our school building at approximately 5:45 p.m.

We need volunteers to help CARITAS personnel sign in the homeless, offer them refreshments and make our guests feel at home until the CARITAS bus takes them to their shelter for the night. The bus arrives at approximately 7:00 p.m. Volunteers need to be at Temple by 5:30 p.m. and should be finished by approximately 7:15 p.m.

Two volunteers are needed per night. There will be CARITAS personnel as well as a Beth Ahabah staff member present each evening. No advanced training is needed to perform this mitzvah. Please consider volunteering as an individual or a family. Most Beth Ahabah volunteers agree to work the same night each week for the duration of the program. Several members who have participated in the program with their teenage children have found this a rewarding family experience.

Items such as appropriate magazines, playing cards, books and toiletry items are always welcome as donations. To sign up or for more information, please contact Chuck Greenberg at 794-6800 or cgre41@yahoo.com.

“GIVING THE PERFECT GIFT”

Sometimes finding that perfect holiday gift for those we love or suggesting a gift for ourselves becomes quite challenging. If you are fortunate enough to have all that you need, why not think about making or requesting a gift to Congregation Beth Ahabah?

You can earmark that the gift be made in honor of or in memory of a loved one. This is the Perfect Gift as your generosity helps us meet our goals of providing for “our congregants’ needs and desires and seeking to provide a blend of traditional and new ways to play a meaningful role in all of our congregants’ lives.” A gift notification will be sent but the amount of your gift will not be disclosed. You can mail your gift to Congregation Beth Ahabah, 1111 West Franklin Street, Richmond, VA 23220. Please let us know the name and address of the person or people you want us to notify.

Thank you,
Russell M. Finer, FSA
Executive Director

CBA COMMUNITY
IN SYMPATHY TO THE FAMILIES OF....
Ida Schreiber
  mother of David (Marilyn) Schreiber
Cheryll Nachman
  wife of Ken Nachman
  daughter-in-law of Rosalie Nachman (z'l)
  sister-in-law of John (Paula) Nachman
  sister-in-law of Nancy (David) Oser
Frances Shapiro
  grandmother of Dana Reynolds
Burnett Kastenbaum
  mother of Bobby (Betsy) Kastenbaum
Rosalie Nachman
  mother of John (Paula) Nachman
  mother of Ken Nachman
  mother of Nancy (David) Oser

Jack M. Kreuter
  father of Wendy Kreuter (Kenneth Salken)
Leatrice Terrell
  mother of Laura (Rob) Davidson
James Ebert
  father of Barbara Ebert (Jeffrey Brownstein)
Bernard Kastenbaum
  father of Bobby (Betsy) Kastenbaum
Mary Bo Gassman
  mother of Mackenzie (David) Weiss

CONGRATULATIONS TO....
Helene & Richard Lee on the birth of their grandson, Cooper Harvey Flacks born July 31, 2015. Also, to parents, Alison & Mitch Flacks.

Katherine Godin & Edward Mitchell on their marriage September 19, 2015.

Linda & Rick Gary on the birth of their grandson, Bryce Nathan Carroll born September 25, 2015. Also, to parents, Lauren & Calen Carroll.

Nicolette & Thomas Zbell on the birth of their daughter, Lily Cecilia Zbell born October 11, 2015. Also, to grandparents, Miriam & John LeBlanc.
BETH AHABAH TEENS
by Brian Strauss, Teen Engagement Specialist

Beth Ahabah Teens are going to start Hanukkah off with a lock-in on Saturday, December 5th. Together we’ll go ice skating downtown and then come back to Beth Ahabah where we’ll do fun activities! This event is open to everyone in 8th to 12th grade, so come for a great time!

On two Mondays a month, 11th and 12th graders are invited to reconnect with their friends from Beth Ahabah and join Brian, the CBA Teen Engagement Specialist, in either a dessert social or an informal discussion. Participants will join the Midrasha dinner at 6:30 pm and then begin our program at 7:00 pm. Feel free to come just once or every time!

Upcoming Informal Discussion:
December 7th

Upcoming Dessert Reception:
January 11th

NFTY-MAR’s Fall Kallah!
From December 27th to December 29th will be NFTY-MAR’s Fall Kallah! Get to know Jewish teens from Maryland, Virginia, DC, and North Carolina over winter break! This event is open to all 9th through 12th graders. Brian will e-mail more details as we get closer.

MITZVAH CORPS
The Mitzvah Corps trip will be going to Atlanta Martin Luther King Day weekend (January 15th - January 17th). Together we will look travel to Atlanta to look at how social justice and civil rights helped shape the city.

B’nei Mitzvah

Carter Alex Moes will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on December 5, 2015. Carter is the son of Melissa Moes & Eric Denmon and Neil Moes & Melissa Marks-Moes. He is the older brother of his sister Abigail and his step-siblings, McKenzie and Alex Denmon. Carter is the grandson of Barbara & Howard Skurka and Dale & Victor Moes. Carter is in the 7th grade at Short Pump Middle School. Along with enjoying time with his family and friends, Carter loves technology and watching sports. For his Mitzvah Project, Carter volunteered over 25 hours at Colonial Trail Elementary School helping with many after school programs and events.

We are extremely proud of Carter for all his hard work and dedication in preparing for his Bar Mitzvah. Carter is excited to share his special day with his family and friends and the Beth Ahabah community.

Audrey Longstaff will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on December 12, 2015. She is the daughter of Melissa and Steven Longstaff and sister of Sara Jane, Isabel and Benjamin Longstaff.

Audrey is an 8th grade student at Midlothian Middle School. She serves as a Madrich at Beth Ahabah and loves animals, running, music and spending time with her friends.

For her Mitzvah Project, Audrey is collecting small toys and books for the patients at Children’s Hospital of Richmond at VCU. The drive is called “Sunshine in a Box” and will serve to brighten the children’s day.

We are very proud of Audrey, and look forward to celebrating this special milestone with family and friends.

Mazal Tov!
Celia Pryor Conn will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on January 16, 2016. Celia is the daughter of Heather and Martin Conn and the older sister of Julius and Simon.

Celia is a 7th grade student at Richmond Montessori School, where she plays on the basketball and soccer teams. She enjoys spending time with her friends, but also snuggling up quietly with a good book. Celia also loves going to rock concerts and UVA basketball games.

Because of her passion for reading, for her Mitzvah Project, Celia volunteered to spearhead her school’s first book drive to support the Richmond Children’s Museum Central Virginia Book Bank. Preparing newsletters and fliers, encouraging fellow students, parents and grandparents, and gathering and organizing hundreds of books, Celia helped bring the gift of reading to many needy children in our community.

Celia is anxious to read from the Torah for the first time. We are so proud of her for her diligent preparation and we all look forward to celebrating with our friends and family.

Jonah Ratner will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on January 30, 2016. Jonah is the son of Todd and Sarah Ratner and the younger brother of Benjamin Ratner.

Jonah is in 7th grade at Tuckahoe Middle School. He enjoys basketball, swimming, video games, comic books, music, and spending summers at Camp Schodack—a Ratner family tradition.

Jonah’s Mitzvah Project will support the Faison School for Autism. We are so proud of his hard work and are thrilled to celebrate with friends and family.

NFTY-MAR’s MAIYK Event
NFTY-MAR’s event, MAIYK, will be from January 29th to January 31st! This event will be open to everyone in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades and is a great way to get to know NFTY-MAR before you get to high school. Brian will send more information about MAIYK as it gets closer.

Also lookout for the Teen Newsletter, which is sent out twice a month!

Recipes From Our Mothers’ Kitchens:
Have a cherished family recipe you’d like to share?

Scan it from an old sisterhood or temple cookbook if you love the graphics, or send the details in an email to Susan Morgan at susan@susanwmorganpr.com.

For families with students in college or graduate school: The Beth Ahabah Sisterhood will be sending students a little something for Hanukkah.

Please send your child’s name, email address, school, and year to Lori Bekenstein at lori.bek@verizon.net. Even if contact information has not changed from last year, please email Lori to confirm your student’s contact information.
Congratulations to Ramona Brand!

In October, the Jewish Women’s Archive recognized CBA education director Ramona Brand as the 2015 Natalia Twersky Educator Award winner. The award honors and celebrates inspiring educators who creatively use primary sources to integrate the stories of Jewish women to better address challenges that we face as a congregation. We will also call upon our strengthened network of support from the connections that we each fostered.

As I write this on the final day of our experience, the most difficult part to convey is how I feel inside. It is Shabbat, and I am reflecting on the Kabbalat Services from this morning. Imagine a room that holds the spirituality and wisdom of hundreds of Rabbis; the musical beauty of hundreds of Cantors and choir members; the energy and imagination of hundreds of high school and college leaders; the knowledge of hundreds of scholars and educators; the creative will of hundreds of change agents; and the faith of 5,000 Jews. Inspirational! Life changing!

Will I attend the next URJ Biennial, in Boston, December 2017? You bet!

It Doesn’t End Here
With each of us attending a variety of events and workshops, the scope of ideas and learning is both broad and deep. In the coming months, we will share notes and discuss how to adapt best practices and integrate strategies into their teaching. The annual award is named for Natalia Twersky, a champion of Jewish education and the mother of JWA’s founding director, Gail Twersky Reimer. The award honors the work of educators committed to gender-inclusive curricula while also recognizing the schools that support their efforts.

Natalia Twersky grew up in Cracow, Poland, and survived Auschwitz before coming to the U.S. in 1945. Although she lost any simple faith and orthodox practice, she remained steadfast in her belief in Jewish education, recognizing its power to guide a next generation to know who they are and from where they have come.

Ramona was recognized for her winning lesson plan, “Our World Through a Jewish Lens,” which introduces students in grades 8-10 to photojournalist Ruth Gruber, whose work was influenced by her Jewish identity, and asks how they might express a Jewish point of view through photography.

As the winning educator, Ramona was awarded a prize that generously included a $400 donation to the Thalhimer Religious School!

Mazal Tov!
HANUKKAH
by Rabbi Martin P. Beifeld, Jr.

It’s time to get our menorahs out of the back of the cabinet or off the shelf; Hanukkah begins the night of December 6th. We’ll celebrate Hanukkah at the Temple with a family service on the 11th (at 6:15 followed by a Hanukkah dinner) and our annual family Hanukkah party on Sunday, December 13th.

Do we make too big a deal of Hanukkah? The Jewish answer is: yes…and no. Lots of people criticize the contemporary observance of Hanukkah by saying we have turned it into a Jewish Christmas. So as not to deprive our children of the excitement of Christmas, we pile up the presents and decorate our homes with Hanukkah themed tinsel and banners. We say, “they have Christmas, but we have Hanukkah.” And who has not heard, “we get eight nights of presents instead of just one?” When we turn Hanukkah into a contest to prove which religion is better, we are making too big a deal of Hanukkah. When we make Hanukkah important to compensate for low Jewish self-image, we are making too big a deal of Hanukkah. When we use our observance of Hanukkah to substitute for little or no other Jewish observance during the rest of the year, we are making too big a deal of Hanukkah.

When Hanukkah is one of many times during the year when Judaism comes alive in our homes, we are celebrating Hanukkah just right. When we light Shabbat candles on a regular basis, lighting them at Hanukkah time is exactly the right thing to do. When we place a beautiful Kiddush cup on the table to welcome the Sabbath, making a fuss over a special menorah (the Hebrew term for the menorah we use at Hanukkah is ha-nu-key-YA) at Hanukkah time is exactly the right thing to do. When we eat matzah on Passover, blintzes on Shavuot, apples and honey on Rosh Hashanah, eating latkes on Hanukkah is exactly the right thing to do. When we get together with family and friends for Seder and to break-the-fast on Yom Kippur, having a party at Hanukkah time is exactly the right thing to do. When we give prizes to the children who search for the afikomen and who get dressed as Esther or Mordecai on Purim, giving gifts at Hanukkah time is exactly the right thing to do.

When Hanukkah is IT, the only Jewish thing we do all year, we are making too big a deal of Hanukkah. And it won’t work. It won’t be the magic pill which turns our children or grandchildren into proud, committed Jews. When Hanukkah is one part of a year long, day in and day out practice of Jewish life, the way we observe Hanukkah will be exactly right.

NEW FOR FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICES

Services Start Earlier:
On December 11, January 8, February 12, March 4 and March 11 (all but March 4 are the second Friday of the month) services will begin at 6:15 pm instead of our usual starting time of 7:30 pm.

Services on those nights will be about forty-five minutes long and will be followed by a dinner at 7 pm to which everyone at services is invited. The shorter service will include mostly singing, a Torah reading, and usually a story from one of the Rabbis. The services will be more informal than our 7:30 service and the dress is “come-as-you-are.” To help our planning, please make a reservation for dinner.

Birthday and Anniversary Aliyahs:
On December 18, January 15, February 19, March 18 and April 15 (all are the third Friday of the month) everybody in the congregation who is celebrating a birthday or anniversary in that month will be invited to the Bimah for a prayer in honor of their special occasion. If the Torah is being read on those nights, they will also have the group honor of an Aliyah, being called to the Torah as a group to say the Torah blessings.

Having a Moving Experience?

If you’re hanging your mezuzah on a new doorpost, please be sure to let us know right away. That will keep the Bulletin and other mailings coming to you promptly—and save us postal fees.
We want to keep you posted!

May Your Hanukkah shine bright with Peace & Happiness!
**HANUKKAH THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS**

**December 6 – 14, 2015**

**Lighting the Menorah at Home**
Candles are added to the hanukkiyah (menorah) from right to left but are kindled from left to right. The newest candle is lit first. (On the Shabbat of Hanukkah, kindle the Hanukkah lights first and then the Shabbat candles.) Light the shamash (the helper candle) first, using it to kindle the rest of the Hanukkah lights. As you do, say or sing:

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tsivanu l'hadlik ner shel Hanukkah.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who hallows us with mitzvot, commanding us to kindle the Hanukkah lights.

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, she-asah nisim laavoteinu v'imoteinu bayamim hahaeim baz'man hazeh.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who performed wondrous deeds for our ancestors in days of old at this season.

For first night only:

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higianu laz'man hazeh.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this season.

**Hanerot Halalu**
We kindle these lights because of the wondrous deliverance You performed for our ancestors. During these eight days of Hanukkah, these lights are sacred; we are not to use them but only to behold them, so that their glow may rouse us to give thanks for Your wondrous acts of deliverance.

See more at: [http://www.reformjudaism.org/practice/prayers-blessings/hanukkah-blessings#shash.nhHlfI0.dpuf](http://www.reformjudaism.org/practice/prayers-blessings/hanukkah-blessings#shash.nhHlfI0.dpuf)

**Sing Together**

*Ma'oz Tzur* (“Rock of Ages”), a Hanukkah song, traditionally is sung after the lighting of the candles each night, and at other times throughout the holiday. It was composed in Europe in the 12th or 13th century. “I Have a Little Dreidel” is a modern-day children’s song frequently sung during the Festival of Lights. Other holiday favorites include “Hanukkah, Oh Hanukkah,” “Sivivon, sov, sov,” a Hebrew folksong, “Light One Candle,” written by Peter Yarrow, and “The Latke Song,” by Debbie Friedman, z”l, the renowned Jewish singer and songwriter.

**Play Dreidel Together**
The word dreidel derives from a German word meaning “spinning top,” and is the toy used in a Hanukkah game adapted from an old German gambling game. Hanukkah was one of the few times of the year when rabbis permitted games of chance. The four sides of the top bear four Hebrew letters: nun, gimel, hey, and shin.

Players begin by putting into a central pot or “kitty” a certain number of coins, chocolate money known as gelt, nuts, buttons or other small objects. Each player in turn spins the dreidel and proceeds as follows:

• **nun** – take nothing;
• **gimmel** – take everything;
• **hey** – take half;
• **shin** – put one in.

Over time, the letters on the dreidel were reinterpreted to stand for the first letter of each word in the Hebrew statement “Neis gadol hayah sham,” which means “A great miracle happened there” and refers to the defeat of the Syrian army and the re-dedication of the Temple. In Israel, one letter on the dreidel differs from those used in the rest of the world. The shin has been replaced with a pey, transforming the Hebrew statement into Neis gadol hayah po, which means “A great miracle happened here.”
In September CBA celebrated the UCI World Cycling Championships. Families and friends met members of the Israeli cycling team and watched the races from the Temple steps.

About 30 CBA families spent a beautiful September morning Apple Picking at Carter Mountain Orchard in Charlottesville. In addition to apple picking, they visited a pumpkin patch, took a hay ride and enjoyed cider and ice cream treats.

Students from Hillel at VCU meet at the Joel House for Friday night services and weekly Wednesday night event.
I had the pleasure of interviewing Salo Levinas, the architect for Beth Ahabah’s renovation.

Below is an edited transcript.

LINDA: Larry Salzman, chair of Beth Ahabah’s architectural review committee, and in real estate for over 40 years, stated he has never met an architect that has taken such a comprehensive look at a project. You studied sun angles, the pattern of the buildings on the street and listened to outside noises.

SALO: Thank you, that is a very nice compliment. All of that is very important. I start every project with a humble attitude, and without any preconceived ideas. To be completely open. The big thing is to listen. Really listen. Study who your client is. To understand the congregation. What you believe, feel and need; your prayer. How you intend to walk through and utilize the space. And also to integrate the structure into the fabric of the neighborhood.

LINDA: Ten Charrettes were held over the summer of 2014 with approximately 150 members in attendance. You attended each one and heard all our visions. Our vision for education, social needs, Museum and Archives, spiritual, recreation, security and technology needs.

SALO: Each congregation is different. Beth Ahabah is a very unique congregation. The needs are different. Richmond is different too. You have a beautiful and historic synagogue that is more than 100 years old. It will be very important to integrate the historic building with the new. First I need to understand what your synagogue is and then create a dialogue between the new and old, so they work well together and do not compete.

LINDA: You have designed many Synagogues. How did you get into designing Synagogues?

SALO: Coincidence. My synagogue asked me to present a design for the new synagogue. My proposal was accepted from amongst other designs. We built it. The architecture was recognized. And other congregations requested my designs. I started to do more and more. I like it very much. Creating a spiritual building is a unique challenge. It is a very important job for me.

LINDA: What is your background and how did you get into architecture?

SALO: I grew up in Argentina in a very large Jewish community. I first studied physics and sociology. I very much enjoyed learning how things worked. In physics you understand how things work in a material way and in sociology you understand how things work in society. In someway architecture is in the middle. You need to understand how the building is going to work with materials and shapes and structural and mechanical. So when you know how materials work and how people work you can build a better building.
LINDA: Do you have a favorite building you have designed?

SALO: I don’t have one building I like more than another. They are like children. I have three daughters. I go to give one a kiss goodnight and she is the most beautiful child in the world. Then after, I go to kiss another and she is the most beautiful. When I am with each building, I enjoy them, I feel them. And then, like a child who grows independent, you say goodbye. You feel depressed you are no longer with it. But it is always your child. You are most proud if the building achieves its goal. It serves the purpose intended. And the people enjoy it. Awards are nice. But there is nothing better than when people enjoy the structure and space. Whether it is a school, a house or a synagogue.

LINDA: I know everyone is clamoring to see what the renovation is going to look like. But I am told by the architectural committee it is a long process before any plans are finalized and approved. Not only does Beth Ahabah need to approve the design, but the neighboring communities will have a say. And of course there are city regulations and approvals.

SALO: Yes. First of course it is necessary to meet the needs of the congregation. And also the regulations and restrictions of the city. We will need to get approvals one by one. We will listen and respond to concerns and the process will be easier and smoother. It all takes time.

SOME NOTES:
Beth Ahabah’s architectural review committee is comprised of two architects, one engineer, a technology expert to assess our technological needs in the future, an education specialist to determine our future uses and functions of our educational programming, a social and ADA expert to make sure that all Beth Ahabah functions are accessible to all, a real estate appraiser and real estate attorney. All of the above are Beth Ahabah members.

Our first phase of construction will unify entrances. The sanctuary, Joel House, Religious school and administration will share one entrance. The entrance will be handicap accessible and you will be able to go from one building to another without going outside. The administrative offices will move to the new space created, thus emptying the old administration building. This will create a new revenue stream from rentals. New flexible meeting and recreation space will also be added.

To see more about Salo Levinas go to: shinberglevinas.com

Linda Held Wren, a fifth generation member of Beth Ahabah, chairs the Generations Capital Campaign Marketing committee, and sits on two other committees. Her business, WREN, is Creative Strategy, Advertising and Design. She is married to Matt Wren and is the mother of Carly and Alec.
Hanukkah Celebrations Around the World

The smell of potatoes frying in oil is, for me, an instant visceral transportation into Hanukkah. This ubiquitous treat is everywhere in December, and who could imagine a Hanukkah without latkes smothered in applesauce and sour-cream? Lighting the menorah, wrapped presents piled high, foil covered gelt shimmering in the light of the candles—these all speak to us as wonderful traditions of the holiday. As most American Jews are of Ashkenazi decent, these traditions come primarily from Eastern Europe. But what of other Hanukkah traditions? Jews live all over the world and traditions vary from culture to culture. Let’s take a quick international trip and discover how Hanukkah is celebrated by Jews in other countries.

In Israel children spin dreidels (or sivivon) that say Nes Gadol Haya Po meaning A Great Miracle Happened Here and eat sufganyot, a jelly filled fried donut.

Yemini Jews celebrate Woman’s Night on the seventh night of Hanukkah to commemorate the bravery of the women of the Hanukkah story, Hannah and Judith.

Sephardic Jews who live in places like Istanbul, Turkey sing Ocho Kandilikas, a Ladino song, and eat bimuelos or fried fritters.

In Colombia, plantains are fried and eaten.

In the Alsace region of France fathers and sons have special two tiered Hanukkiyot (menorahs) that they light together for each of the 8 nights of Hanukkah.

In India, candle wicks are soaked in coconut oil and children eat a sweet called burfi, made from boiled milk and sugar sometimes flavored with nuts or rose oil.

Hanukkah comes in summertime for children in Australia and families celebrate by going to parks and drinking milkshakes.

No matter where they live in the world, Jews celebrate by being together with family and friends, eating special foods, exchanging gifts and lighting the menorah. Try a few of these international customs on for size this Hanukkah and have a Chag Samech (Happy Holiday) where ever you are celebrating!

Recipe: Bunuelos (or Bimuelos) with Honey
Sephardic Hanukkah Donuts
Makes 14 servings

Celebrate Hanukkah with this rustic yeast-raised and fried donut. Serve with traditional honey.

Ingredients
1 package dry yeast (2 1/4 teaspoons)
2 cups warm water, divided
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 teaspoons sugar
1 tablespoon oil
3 1/4 cups all-purpose flour (14.6 ounces)
Oil for deep frying
Honey (or powdered sugar)

Instructions
• Stir the yeast into 1 cup of the warm water and allow to proof. (If you don’t see bubbles after a few minutes, buy new yeast.)
• Mix in the remaining cup of water along with the salt, sugar and tablespoon of oil. Slowly stir in the flour, and keep stirring until you have a smooth, wet dough.
• Cover and allow to rise in a warm spot for at least 1 hour. (I’ve allowed it to go four hours, stirring down occasionally, and it only gets more delicious).
• Put 3 inches of oil in a pot suitable for deep frying and bring to 370 degrees F. Line a tray with paper towels. Get a bowl of water ready.
• Moisten your hands in the bowl of water and grab about 3 tablespoons of the dough.
• Quickly form it into a rough ball and poke a hole through the center. These are supposed to be rustic, don’t spend any time trying to make them perfect.
• Drop carefully into the oil. Repeat for as many as will fit comfortably in your pot without crowding. Fry until golden brown on one side, then flip and brown the other side. Use a slotted spoon to remove to paper towels.
• Drizzle with honey (or offer honey for dipping, or dust with powdered sugar) and serve immediately.

Religious School continues on page 17
Last Fall, Beth Ahabah Women of Reform Judaism (Sisterhood) sponsored a brunch which was attended by 21 people. Existing and new members showed up to eat, schmooze and discuss the future of Sisterhood at Beth Ahabah.

The group tackled several tough questions.

How does Sisterhood support the Beth Ahabah community?
Beth Ahabah Sisterhood provides candlesticks for baby namings and B’nei Mitzvah, bibles for Confirmands, baked goods for Onegs, financial and physical assistance with Religious School activities, Sukkah decorating and social activities for congregational members such as Game Night and Brunches.

What types of programming would you like to see Sisterhood sponsor?
The consensus was that we should focus on one major social action project and perhaps one or two programs throughout the year.

Half the Sky will continue to be our social project. For the past two years we have sponsored educational grants for five girls in Cambodia and have raised funds towards the construction of or addition to educational buildings in third world countries.

In January, Sisterhood will be sponsoring a Safety program for high school girls. Look in the e-news for further details.

How can Sisterhood be personally beneficial to you?
The group agreed that the best thing Sisterhood can do is to help create connections among the women in our community.

We talked about creating foster “mini” Chavurah groups throughout our community. As an example, one group of women who live in the Fan currently get together once a month for dinner.

Another example could be a movie group for those interested in going to the movies together.

Please let me know if you have any suggestions for “mini” Chavurah groups that you would like to see formed.

With these initiatives in place, Beth Ahabah WRJ looks forward to strengthening our connections with women throughout our community and continued support of congregational activities.

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**Women of Reform Judaism continued from Page 4**

Highlights of the WRJ Assembly included educational workshops and learning sessions, forums, and speakers, including Vice President of the United States Joe Biden, actor and inclusion activist Michael Douglas, The New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof, The New York Times correspondent Jodi Kantor, Union Square Hospitality Group CEO Danny Meyer, U.S. Attorney Paul Fishman, U.S. Ambassador-at-Large of International Religious Freedom and former Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC) Director Rabbi David Saperstein, and current RAC Director and URJ Senior Vice President Rabbi Jonah Pesner. As in previous years, the WRJ Assembly joined together with the concurrently held Union for Reform Judaism (URJ)’s Biennial for a Shabbat celebration of 5,000 Jews who participated in services, music, and programs.

Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ) strengthens the voice of women worldwide and empowers them to create caring communities, nurture congregations, cultivate personal and spiritual growth, and advocate for and promote progressive Jewish values.

We talked about creating foster “mini” Chavurah groups throughout our community. As an example, one group of women who live in the Fan currently get together once a month for dinner.

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Please let me know if you have any suggestions for “mini” Chavurah groups that you would like to see formed.

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**TU B’ SHEVAT**

January 24 & 25

Tu B’Shevat or the “New Year of the Trees” is the Jewish Arbor Day. Scholars believe that originally Tu B’Shevat was an agricultural festival, marking the emergence of spring. In the 17th century, Kabbalists created a ritual for Tu B’Shevat that is similar to a Passover seder. Today many Jews hold a modern version of the Tu B’Shevat seder each year. The holiday has also become a tree-planting festival in Israel, in which many Israelis and Jews around the world plant trees in honor or in memory of loved ones.
“Adonai…tonight we celebrate the men who constitute our Brotherhood. We acknowledge their tireless service to our community and pay tribute to their commitment to our heritage. We honor their love of their families, and we celebrate their unique spirituality and humble reverence of the sacred of their lives. May their heroism, generosity, truth and sincerity continue to enrich the life of our beloved Temple, forever….Amen.”

This is the first paragraph of our recent (10/30/15) Beth Ahabah Brotherhood Shabbat service. As Brotherhood President I was given the honor of starting the service readings. This is part of a prayer created by the Brotherhood of Ohef Shalom in Norfolk, Virginia, that we’ve incorporated in more recent Brotherhood Shabbat services. In my heart and mind, it has almost become an anthem for our Brotherhood as it so aptly describes and refers to the men of our Brotherhood, who contribute to our congregation in so many different and vital ways. Men of Brotherhood who contribute their time in any amount and in any way to serve the congregation deserve recognition in a special Shabbat service. Even more importantly, this Shabbat service stands as a wonderful example to our youth, of commitment to our synagogue and Judaism set by our Fathers, Brothers and Uncles at Beth Ahabah.

Each man who participated in the service is a hero to me; all the readers, Torah chanters, and the choir with limited preparation time to harmonize so exactly and sing prayers from the heart. Alan Corbett has organized Brotherhood Shabbat for many years and what an outstanding job he does pulling it all together for us.

This year’s service was especially exciting as Rob Davidson won the Sam Troy Award (Brotherhood’s Recognition as CBA Volunteer/Member of the Year) for a second time. Only an icon, Harold Straus (OBM) won it twice before. Brotherhood also presented Rabbi Beifield an award previously given just twice in Brotherhood history, the “Brotherhood Lifetime Achievement Award.” Rabbi Beifield is now a member of our Brotherhood in perpetuity. Also making it an historic and inspirational night was our guest speaker, Rabbi Meir Azari, the leading Reform Rabbi in Israel. Many thanks to Rabbi Beifield for making this happen.

The calendar at Beth Ahabah moves on, and so does our Brotherhood, stepping up to not only our longtime commitments of Shabbat and life event ushering, B’Nei Mitzvah presentations and cooking latkes for Hanukkah but also assisting in upcoming rabbinical candidate brunches. Brotherhood has more activities to come. Look for our upcoming events, including a fun family outing (pizza and game tickets), Saturday, Feb. 6 at 6 p.m. for a University of Richmond basketball game at the Robins Center.

Respectfully submitted,
David Feibish
Brotherhood President
Email: oldbenz@aol.com

The More We Support Them, the More They Support Us!

B’Yachad, the temple bulletin, is supported through the generous support of our advertisers. Show that you appreciate them by using their services and/or products. When you do, please mention that you saw their ad in the Congregation Beth Ahabah B’Yachad. Thank you.
RELIGIOUS SCHOOL HANUKKAH PARTY AND CAMP FAIR
Sunday, December 13 from 9:30 to 11:30 am
in the Goldburg Auditorium and Primary School Wing

FUN FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY!
Eat Brotherhood’s delicious latkes. Make a menorah. Lego races! Make candles. Win a delicious treat at the Cake Walk. Spin and win in a rip-roaring dreidel contest. Enjoy a concert of great holiday music by Ruach Chadash. Games for kids of all ages, crafts, candle lighting, friends. There’s something for everyone to enjoy. New this year: Participate in a Mitzvah Project by making a decorator bag to fill with toiletries for our Caritas guests. Small bottles of shampoo, soaps, washes, lotion etc. are appreciated. Chag Samech!

IT’S NEVER TOO EARLY TO THINK SUMMER!!
Meet representatives from area Jewish camps. Children who attend a Jewish camp, whether day camp or overnight have a stronger Jewish identity. Jewish campers often become Jewish leaders in the community as adults.
Come find out about some of our areas Jewish camps. Volunteers needed!!
Contact Ramona at r.brand@bethahabah.org or Dot Heffron at dotheffron@gmail.com for more information.

TU B’SHEVAT GALA CELEBRATION
FOR GRADES PRE-K - 3
January 24th  9:30am – 11:30am
AT LEWIS GINTER BOTANICAL GARDEN
Families with students in grades Pre-K – 3 are invited to experience Tu B’Shevat at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. Taste the first fruits of Israel; experience a walk-through Seder; go on a tree Scavenger hunt in the Conservatory; enjoy hands on activities about nature and the coming spring.
Surround yourself with the sights, sounds, smells and tastes of nature!!

ALL OTHER GRADES WILL MEET AT BETH AHAHAB FOR CLASSES.

Religious School continued from page 12

GRADE 6 FIELD TRIP TO KROGER
Sunday, January 3rd
Leave Beth Ahabah at 9:45am - Return by 11:45 am

6th graders will walk to the Kroger on Lombardy for a morning of interactive fun. Heksher hunts, Hebrew food word scavenger searches, and real-life understanding of Jewish values regarding food, eating and growing are combined for a memorable experiential class. Please make sure your child is dressed for walking in cold weather. Grade 6 parents are invited to accompany their student on this trip. Parent chaperones are welcome.
Contact Ramona at r.brand@bethahabah.org to volunteer.

5TH GRADE GESHER
Sunday, January 31 at 9:15 am
Parents are invited to join Rabbi Beifield for a Parent Education class on the theme: “Diversity in Judaism” before joining their children for an age appropriate craft activity.

FAMILY MINGLES
Sunday, January 10 at 9:30 am
In the Joel House multi-purpose room
Sunday Morning Social includes brunch and mingling with other parents in your child’s classes. A great way to make connections!
DONATIONS

TEMPLE FUND
IN APPRECIATION:
Neil Schlussel
IN HONOR OF:
Katie Roeper’s Temple Presidency
   Deborah Greenberg
Ramona Brand receiving the
   Jewish Women’s Archive Award
   Katie & Ken Roeper
Ashley Feibish and Zachary
Morris’s wedding
   Katie & Ken Roeper
Lori Skiles speedy recovery
   Katie & Ken Roeper
IN MEMORY OF:
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   Ken & Katie Roeper
   Linda & Irvin Seeman
   Janice & Robert Freed
Mother of Susie Byer
   Donald & Joanne Marcus
Doris Beifeld
   Carol & Michael Sesnowitz
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   Steve & Ellyn Sukonick
   Karen & Barry Hofheimer
   Michael & Nancy Jaffe
   Katie & Ken Roeper
   Steve & Dorothy Bernstein
   Renate Forssmann-Falck
Barbara Greenberg
   Karen & Barry Hofheimer
Albert Katz
   Rob & Laura Davidson
Ida Schreiber
   Rob, Laura, Liz & Sarah Davidson
Jesse Goldstein
   Judith & Isaac Koziol
Jane Stewart Brown
   Demis Stewart
Hilde Blumenthal
   Lynn B. Stevenson
Sister-in-law of Beth Gillispie
   Lesley & David Greenberg

Charles Thalhimer, Sr.
   Marcia & Harry Thalhimer, Ellen &
   Jack Holland and their families
Cheryll Haber Nachman
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   Marks & Howard F. Marks, Jr.
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   Gloria Starkman
Bernard Schanzer
   Harriet Schanzer
Jerome Gumenick
   Randolph S. Gumenick
Shirley Plotkin, my mother
   Marianne & Ted Metzger
Mary Zachary
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James Ebert
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Pamela S. Finer & Harry Yaffe
   Russell Finer

THE RABBI’S
PHILANTHROPIC FUND

An armed security guard is on duty at
Hebrew Cemetery on the first and third
Sundays of the month from
Noon to 3:00 p.m.

These contributions were received in
response to the Annual Appeal:
Morton Thalhimer, Jr.
Kathy Moran & Woody Beach

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Leta & Peter Greenberg
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Edith Brenner
Shirley Sukonick
Vicky & Graenum Schiff
Marilyn Lowenstein
Rosemary & Cullen Seltzer
Eileen & Mike Katz
Dorothy & Steve Bernstein
IN APPRECIATION OF:
The Rabbi’s for my Adult Bat
Mitzvah preparation
   Deborah Greenberg

Donations continue on Page 20
This wimpel was created to commemorate the birth of Samuel Goldsmith. It is hand-painted with each word decorated in different colors throughout the cloth. It reads “Shmuel son of Asher Goldschmidt born on the 23rd day in the month of Tammuz 5696 (July 13, 1936.) May God raise him to a life of Torah, chuppah and good deeds. Amen.” It is a bright and whimsical design and you can see that the word “born” incorporates a stork into the Hebrew letters.

Ceremonial textiles such as this are considered to be Jewish Folk art. The practice of creating a wimpel dates from 400 years ago. It is primarily German in origin. The word “wimpel” in German means “pennant” or “banner.” The cloth from a circumcision ceremony was cleaned, cut into long strips about 7 inches wide and sewn into a banner at least 7 feet long. It was then embroidered or painted and used as a special wrapper (binder) for the Torah. Thus from the moment of birth forward, a connection was made between the child and the Torah. The wimple was used as a Torah binder during the child’s Bar Mitzvah ceremony. Often wimpels have a decoration of a chuppah on them in the hopes that the child would be brought under the chuppah to be married. A wimpel may even be incorporated into a chuppah during a wedding ceremony. Sometimes there are signs of the zodiac or biblical quotations included within the design. Often the wimpel is decorated with a binding around the edges. Some communities make wimpels for girls as well as boys, using favorite articles of clothing from family members in place of a circumcision cloth. The creation of a wimple can be a family event that involves multiple generations.

Gifts That Make A Difference...Simchah or Remembrance
Charitable Giving in honor of or in memory of a loved one is an important tradition for the Beth Ahabah congregation. Making a gift to the temple offers a positive way to affirm your values and priorities and protect our future Jewish way of life. Honoring a friend or loved one through charitable gifts is often an especially meaningful act of paying tribute to someone special, while assuring that worthwhile giving continues to influence our children, grandchildren and the world around us.

Beth Ahabah has a wide range of donation opportunities available. The list can be viewed on the Temple website or you can call the Temple office at 804.358.6757.

Thank you for your consideration.
IN MEMORY OF:
Doris Beifield
Karen & Dan Hough
Ramona Brand & Harlan Loebman
Shannon Kelley & Michael Mendelson
Janice & Robert Freed
Judith & Ike Koziol
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CANTOR GOLDMAN MUSIC FUND
IN HONOR OF:
Rachel & Jim Schmidt’s 40th wedding anniversary
Debbie & George Stern
Deborah Greenberg
Natan Berenshteyn’s music during high holydays
Ken & Katie Roeper

Sarah Beck-Berman’s wonderful voice during high holydays
Ken & Katie Roeper

IN MEMORY OF:
Estelle Finer, my wife
Allen Finer
Steven Finer, my grandnephew
Allen Finer
Sydney I. Kaplan, my brother-in-law
Allen Finer
Doris Beifield
Fern Cohen
Robin Butin
Sandy & Alan Corbett

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Edith Brenner
Rosalie Nachman
Janice & Robert Freed

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Jerry Gumenick
Betty Sue & Todd LePage
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Betty Sue & Todd LePage
Harry Grandis
Nancy Grandis White

SOCIAL ACTION FUND
IN APPRECIATION TO:
Vicki Lynn & Nancy Belleman
The Council for Social Justice
IN HONOR OF:
Miles Lynn’s special birthday
Sheri Cox
Alan Freiden’s special birthday
Janice & Robert Freed

Donations continued from Page 10
Donations continue on Page 21
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JOYNER FINE PROPERTIES
MY FAVORITE LEGAL ICONS
One was Jewish, and the other Episcopalian
by David Farris, Director

My two favorite courses in law school were Constitutional Law and Contracts. Our “con law” book was written by Charles Alan Wright, a well-known scholar and educator. I don’t recall the author or our contracts text but I do recall the professor, Dr. Edwin A. Mooers, quite well as many of his examples revolved around the hypothetical sale of his cigar lighter to a student on some basis. I met Mr. Wright later in life when we both served on a non-profit board in Austin, Texas. Charlie, as he preferred to be called by us, was as a man who looked like John Wayne and talked like William F. Buckley. He taught at the University of Texas School of Law, was a great board chairman, and enjoyable to know. His intellect shone like a beacon.

My later-life icon of the law is a Jewish man who lived not too far from Beth Ahabah, near 1st & Main. A plaque in the sidewalk marks the former homesite of Judah P. Benjamin, known best to many of us by his role in the running of the Confederacy under Jefferson Davis. Davis was in poor health but he had fortunately married a bright young woman named Varina, and had had the good sense to bring Judah Benjamin into his inner circle. One writer suggests that Varina and Benjamin formed a valuable team that managed the business of the Confederacy on a daily basis.

After the war ended and with a price on his head, he disguised himself and made his way to England via the Caribbean. He had been born on St. Thomas, which was British at the time, and thus held an English citizenship as well as American. Trained as a lawyer in Louisiana, he set about establishing himself in the legal field in his new home. He authored a book entitled “Benjamin’s Treatise on the Law of the Sale of Personal Property . . . “ in which he referenced both French and American cases and examples. This book, coupled with his drive and intelligence, propelled him to success in the field, and eventually he gained the status of Queen’s Counsel. Not bad for a nice Jewish boy.

Learn more about Judah P. Benjamin in our Museum & Archives, where you can browse from 10:00 am – 3:00 pm every day except Friday and Saturday. We have no further information on Dr. Mooers and his cigar lighter, but presumably it continued to serve him well in his personal and professional lives. Charles Alan Wright had one more moment in the spotlight when President Nixon sent for him hoping to find some constitutional justification for his actions in the Watergate affair. This was not productive, as we know.

We are located at 1109 W. Franklin St., two doors east of the Sanctuary. You are invited to visit, and to bring your families and friends.
## CBA Community Calendar for December 2015/January 2016

### December 2015

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<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<td>Midweek Hebrew</td>
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<td>Friday, December 4</td>
<td>Shabbat Service</td>
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<td>Saturday, December 5</td>
<td>Shabbat Service</td>
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<td>Bar Mitzvah of Carter Moes</td>
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<td>Sunday, December 6</td>
<td>Religious School</td>
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<td>Meet the Rabbi</td>
<td>9:30 AM</td>
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<td>Meet the Rabbi</td>
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<td>Monday, December 7</td>
<td>Midrasha</td>
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<td>Wednesday, December 9</td>
<td>Midweek Hebrew</td>
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<td>Friday, December 11</td>
<td>Family and New Member Shabbat Service with Etz Chayim</td>
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<td>followed by Shabbat Dinner</td>
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<td>Saturday, December 12</td>
<td>Bat Mitzvah of Audrey Longstaff</td>
<td>10:30 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, December 13</td>
<td>Religious School</td>
<td>9:15 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religious School Hanukkah Party and Camp Fair</td>
<td>9:30 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meet the Rabbi</td>
<td>9:30 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meet the Rabbi</td>
<td>5:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, December 14</td>
<td>Midrasha</td>
<td>6:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, December 16</td>
<td>Midweek Hebrew</td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, December 18</td>
<td>Shabbat Service with Birthday &amp; Anniversary Aliyahs</td>
<td>7:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, December 22</td>
<td>Learners' Shabbat Service with Adult Choir</td>
<td>7:30 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### January 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday, January 1</td>
<td>Oneg Shabbat</td>
<td>6:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shabbat Service in the Gumenick Chapel</td>
<td>6:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, January 3</td>
<td>Religious School</td>
<td>9:15 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, January 4</td>
<td>Midrasha</td>
<td>6:30 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, January 6</td>
<td>Midweek Hebrew</td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, January 8</td>
<td>All School Grades Shabbat Service with Etz Chayim followed by Shabbat Dinner</td>
<td>6:15 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, January 10</td>
<td>Religious School</td>
<td>9:15 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, January 11</td>
<td>Midrasha</td>
<td>6:30 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, January 13</td>
<td>Midweek Hebrew</td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, January 15</td>
<td>Shabbat Service with Birthday &amp; Anniversary Aliyahs</td>
<td>7:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, January 16</td>
<td>Bat Mitzvah of Celia Conn</td>
<td>10:30 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, January 17</td>
<td>Religious School</td>
<td>9:15 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, January 20</td>
<td>Midweek Hebrew</td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, January 22</td>
<td>Learners' Shabbat Service with Adult Choir</td>
<td>7:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, January 24</td>
<td>Religious School</td>
<td>9:15 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, January 27</td>
<td>Midweek Hebrew</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, January 29</td>
<td>Shabbat Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, January 30</td>
<td>Bar Mitzvah of Jonah Ratner</td>
<td>10:30 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, January 31</td>
<td>Religious School</td>
<td>9:15 AM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Calendar information is subject to change, please check the calendar online at bethahabah.org*
NEW MEMBER DINNER
Friday December 11, 2015
In the Goldburg Auditorium

All new members and their families are cordially invited to join us at the Family Shabbat and New Member Hanukkah Dinner

This dinner is free to all new members.
Please call the Temple office 804 358 6757 for cost information or to make your reservations.

Photo: 19th c. Polish Menorah. Photo courtesy of the Beth Ahabah Museum & Archives