HANUKKAH, A CELEBRATION OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

“To me it is not a religious holiday—It is an American holiday.”

“I agree it is an American Holiday—that excludes me! I feel left out.”

“I resent how everyone just assumes that I participate. They ask me questions like: have you finished your Christmas shopping.”

“I find it frustrating. Non-Jews just think that Hanukkah is the Jewish Christmas.”

“I like the music, the lights and decorations and on Christmas day I love watching the movies: It’s a Wonderful Life, Miracle on 34th Street, and others.”

These are the responses of some 10th graders when asked about their personal relationship and experiences with Christmas. While expressing these thoughts everybody seemed to really enjoy Hanukkah, particularly the family time and attention to children.
A Warm Welcome to Our New Members!

Congregation Beth Ahabah would like to welcome the following new members and their families:

   Carol Bender
   Louis & Jill Campbell
   Steven Cohen & Melannie Huber-Cohen
   Mark & Wendy Danzig
   Ann & Peter Goodman
   David & Leslie Greenberg
   Sheldon & Rose Herold
   Ben Isenberg-Rubyan & Akeem Hutcherson
   Brenda Isenberg
   Harry & Barbara Kaplowitz
   David & Amy Lefkowitz
   James Levenson & Janet Distelman
   Marc & Katie Lipschultz
   Stuart & Icer Litvin
   Gerardo & Esther Neuwirth
   Michael & Selamawit Nichols
   Whit & Emily Shane
   Roger Weinberg
   Carol Wheatley

Please excuse us if we missed listing your name, we will include it in the next issue.

We extend a warm welcome to the newest members of our Beth Ahabah community and look forward to engaging you in all of the exciting things that are happening in our congregation.

Carol Ann Callahan
Membership Committee Chairperson

Tikkun Olam

Beth Ahabah volunteers joyfully and efficiently packaged 10,000 meals in less than two hours for Stop Hunger Now on Sunday, Oct. 23, wrapping up the celebration of Sukkot.

Rabbi Scott Nagel noted that it was highly appropriate to share the congregation's bounty on the last harvest day of Sukkot and told a story from the Talmud about one community's failure to address hunger in its midst.

“Food is where Torah begins,” Rabbi Nagel said. “Food is where spirituality begins. Food is where humanity begins. We are here today doing the real work of Sukkot.”

Nearly 80 members of the congregation, about one-third of them children, came out to package meals under the direction of Stop Hunger Now’s regional program manager, Mike Nelson. Nelson said that, working with local religious and civic organizations, the nonprofit will pack 55 million meals this year. Because so many organizations already address hunger in the U.S., Stop Hunger Now sends all of its meals overseas. The meals from Beth Ahabah may go to hurricane-ravaged Haiti.

“We are all very lucky here,” Nelson said. “But where we send our meals there are no safety nets.”

The event was sponsored by the Tikkun Olam Committee and organized by committee chair Vicki Lynn and vice-chair Karen Hough.

“On Sunday our CBA community came out in full force to embrace tikkun olam,” Vicki Lynn said. “It was an incredible turnout. Not only did we package over 10,000 meals, the group donated enough money to provide water filters to make available clean water for over 3,000 people.”

Stop Hunger Now has developed a system that allows volunteers who have never packaged meals before to assemble rice, soy, vitamins and dehydrated vegetables into individual plastic bags and seal them for an easily rehydrated, fully nutritious meal. Once they get the hang of it, volunteers can produce a meal in 30 seconds or less.
A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

_The Eight Candles of Hanukkah_

The first candle glows with a wish for all the best things in life.

The second radiates the love that’s in your heart.

The third candle gleams with good luck and success in all you do.

The fourth is a beam for friendships that stay with you forever…

The fifth candle’s a ray of closeness for family near and far,

and the sixth shines for good health, today and every day.

The seventh candle flickers softly for the joy found in simple pleasures,

and the eighth… a tiny beacon of peace and happiness.

As your _menorah_ glows with light, may all eight days be warm and bright with happiness.

_Russ_

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**Beth Ahabah Cares**

Beth Ahabah Cares reaches out to our congregational members who are ill, hospitalized, or perhaps sitting _Shiva_ by sending cards, making calls, and delivering healing meals. We reach out in times of gladness as well by sending _Mazel Tov_ greetings to our families with new babies. We love sending newly knit caps and/or booties to our newest tiny members.

This active committee is always open to welcoming new members who are available to bake, cook meals, knit, or make telephone calls. Everyone is welcome! If you can give us a little of your time you can help our community in a big way.

Please contact Lori Skiles at 804.346.2684 or llskiles@verizon.net; or Miri Eynan at 804.269.5424 or pink4good@gmail.com to begin touching lives one family at a time.

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**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 10, 2016 through Friday, January 27, 2017**, 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.
One person then said, “For me, the dilemma is being different and how different do I want to be?”

The overwhelming presence of Christian imagery has an undeniable effect on all of us during the holiday season. We cannot go shopping, listen to the radio, watch TV, buy stamps, or renew our drivers’ licenses without being bombarded with wreaths, Christmas trees, and Christmas carols. This constant onslaught of Christian imagery can make us, as Jews, feel small and isolated. We often wonder why we cannot take part in the big party, and worse yet, we can feel as though our own rituals are lacking. In this our children are at the highest risk.

The obvious response is to play up Hanukkah as the Christmas equivalent. But this is simply not the case. Christmas and Hanukkah are too distinctive in emphasis and significance. Christmas is one of the two main holidays of the Christian calendar. It celebrates the birth of Jesus, considered by Christians as the redeemer of humankind. Christmas and Easter are the two significant holidays of Christianity universally celebrated. On the other hand, Hanukkah is a minor Jewish holiday of secondary importance. Its significance has risen in modern times as Jewish families have used it to protect their children from the “Christmas spirit” and its gift-giving atmosphere. In addition, it has gained significance through Israel’s struggle, which parallels that of the ancient Maccabees. The story of Hanukkah is about NOT ADOPTING the dominant culture! Hanukkah is a celebration of how we as a minority (the Maccabees) prevailed against a non-Jewish culture that was being forced upon us! The spirit of these holidays is different. Christmas is the season of rebirth, good will and redemption while Hanukkah celebrates the first martyrs for monotheism.

So what do we do? What do we tell the kids? It is no easy thing. We first need to recognize for ourselves, and communicate to our children, that Christmas is “their party.” It is a nice party, but not ours. We can appreciate the other party and even enjoy and learn from it, but this is simply not our party. Joel Grishaver in his book: 40 Things You Can Do to Save The Jewish People, says that it is important to actively go and visit or participate in a non-Jewish friend’s Christmas celebration. Have fun, but know and understand, this is not our celebration. Then he says invite your non-Jewish friends to come visit and participate in our parties such as a Shabbat dinner, a Passover Seder etc. We need education, both theirs and ours.

So, take this December to learn and enjoy with your friends and neighbors and take the opportunity in the Spring to have them enjoy and learn with you. This holiday season may we remember the strength of the Maccabees and their ability to stay Jewish in a world that did not look like Judaism. And as we light the Hanukkah lights let us continue to be a light unto the nations, always an example of tolerance, integrity, and education.

Happy Hanukkah! Hag Sameach!
Rabbi Scott Nagel

With everyone in red hairnets and plastic gloves and music pumping in the background to help keep things moving, the event in Golburg Auditorium quickly acquired a festive air. Rabbi Nagel circulated among the volunteers, singing and dancing and banging a Stop Hunger Now gong loudly whenever another 1,000 meals had been assembled.

The Stop Hunger Now packing event was held immediately after religious school to make it easier for families to participate, and the Brotherhood provided lunch for volunteers before the event began.
AN IMPORTANT TRANSITION: 
A LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES
By Katie Roeper, Congregational President

We have spent much time over the past 18 months talking about Inspiring Jewish Lives—Building Sacred Community. And while this depends largely on us as members, reaching out to each other, caring for one another, and building relationships, it is also dependent on “behind the scenes” operations.

Fortunately, we have an outstanding staff to provide operational and administrative guidance and support. Russ Finer manages a small but mighty support team of Andrea Shiflett and Lori Allen, who provide the administrative support for the entire congregation and religious school. Lori, who is a talented graphic designer, now also serves as Beth Ahabah’s Media Specialist. Crystal Chewning provides all accounting support. Although Crystal is a contractor, she is every bit as invested as full-time staff and even attends meetings on evenings and weekends when necessary. Additionally, we are blessed to have a dedicated group of volunteers, who have worked tirelessly to ramp up communications through Beth Ahabah’s website, blogs, Facebook, and now Instagram.

Unfortunately, staff and volunteers have been working with one hand tied behind their backs, due to antiquated servers and software to manage Beth Ahabah’s membership and track dues and contributions. Sluggish response time and complicated “work-arounds” have gobbled up staff and volunteer time, forcing us to resort to manual processes, challenging our capacity, and leaving little time to devote to more innovative projects.

As information about everything in the world becomes more accessible each day, our expectations for instant response have also climbed to an all-time high. We expect messages to be short and succinct, appealing, with plenty of advance notice and repeated reminders, easy payment options and a rapid response to inquiries. If these features are not in place, we quickly give up and move on, having no time to waste on inefficient systems. With a focus on improved communication and increased efficiencies, new technology tools are vital for Beth Ahabah to manage distribution lists, provide flexible online payment options that interface with our accounting system, and sync calendars, scheduling, and notification. The goal is to make it as easy as possible for members of our community to participate as fully as we would like—to remove all stumbling blocks as we build our sacred community.

To be fair, our executive director, staff, clergy and lay leadership have long recognized the issues but have had neither the human resources nor the funds to do much beyond a band-aid approach. With a strong IT background, Rabbi Nagel made this a high priority upon his arrival and under his direction we have put together a lay/professional team of IT, financial, and systems experts to manage this important technology transition.

Over the summer, an inventory of all hardware and software was completed to provide a snapshot of the many components to our current system and a needs assessment grew out of discussions about what was and was not working well. The top five Synagogue System Management vendors were identified and after in-depth research, narrowed to the three most likely matches for Beth Ahabah’s needs. The lay/professional team participated in comprehensive demos, reviewed detailed cost estimates with proposals, conducted follow-up exchanges, and reference checks, ultimately leading to a final candidate. The recommendation to move our systems to the cloud was discussed at the October Board meeting and a Board resolution was unanimously passed to support this transition. Plans include running parallel systems in early 2017 with a goal to move all data to the cloud by the end of this fiscal year (May 31, 2017).

This transition will require significant management every step along the way. Our lay/professional team is well prepared; however, if we as members, receive a notice that does not seem to jive with our records, please contact the office immediately so we can work through any discrepancies in the two systems. We appreciate members’ patience as we make this important transition, which will ultimately provide us with a single system for our membership, financials, Religious School enrollment, events payments and tracking, contributions, and fundraising. Further, information that will make our lives easier as members, will be much more accessible and personal information about us will be much more secure.

Great appreciation goes to the lay leaders who are helping to guide the systems transition for our congregation: Judy Malloy (chair), Rob Davidson, Lee Katz, Mike Mendelson,
Many people strive to reach the top in their careers, but for Jeff Reynolds, it has a whole other meaning. Jeff has reached altitudes few have ever experienced, 29,029 feet to be exact. That was the top of Everest in May, 2012.

In December of this year, Jeff plans to summit Mount Vinson in Antarctica, the highest in the continent at 16,050 feet elevation. Jeff will then be able to claim climbing all the highest summits in each of the seven continents. While in Antarctica, his team will also be climbing peaks in the South Sentinel range that have never been attempted.

Jeff is a member of Beth Ahabah. His 2 boys, Evan (age 12) and Bowen (age 11) attend our Religious School.

By day, Jeff works at the Department of Environmental Quality as the agency’s Enforcement Director and is responsible for enforcement of all environmental laws, regulations and permitting.

So how did Jeff get inspired to climb? He was 12 when he first saw the Colorado Rockies on a family trip. “The feeling was so intense, I wanted to jump out of the car and run to those mountains and never come back. That feeling has never left me,” he said.

To prepare for such strenuous climbs Jeff has a regular early-morning exercise routine at the YMCA. He also leads groups in the Blue Ridge Mountains on weekend treks and works as a guide internationally through his company S2 Mountaineering. And to prepare mentally: “Sometimes I’ll force malnourishment and dehydrate to add physical and mental stress,” he said.

“It’s important to never underestimate the conditions and exhaustion.” To survive the 20 below temperatures Jeff will face in Antarctica, he’ll also need the right equipment, including sleds to haul supplies for the month long trip. Unlike Everest, there are no Sherpas in Antarctica.

Be sure to wish Jeff luck and warmth on his trip this December.

(Information adapted from Lisa Crutchfield article)

Editor’s Note:
This is the first of a new series written by and about the members of Beth Ahabah. If you would like to submit an article about a friend or family member or your own adventures, avocations or interesting career, please contact Lori Allen in the Temple office at l.allen@bethahabah.org.
CBA Music Makers
by Laura Savage, CBA Music Committee Chair

Natan Berenshteyn
Director, Composer, Musician extraordinaire

Just a few titles that can be attributed to Natan Berenshteyn. He is entering his 18th year at the musical helm of Beth Ahabah. “Discovered” by Cantor Fran Goldman, Natan started here as an accompanist. Currently, he is the choral director for the Adult and Youth Choirs. He is involved in all aspects of music. “In the Jewish tradition, without music there is no service,” says Natan. “Jewish services are not read—they’re chanted.”

It takes a lot of scheduling and logistics—and rehearsing, rehearsing, rehearsing to execute a service. He plans the “musical menu” for services that feature the children’s choir, adult volunteer choir, the professional choir, and the cantorial soloist, and ensures that everyone has their music in hand when it’s time to start practicing.

Natan modestly reports earning degrees in piano, choral conducting and music pedagogy from both the Soviet Union and the United States. His most recent degree is a Masters of Performing Arts from VCU in the classical piano track.

In addition to directing and accompanying the choirs on the piano, we are privileged to have a prolific composer as well. If you are a regular at Shabbat Services you have experienced the beautiful melodies of his Oseh Shalom and V’Shamru to name a few. And don’t forget, his most recent composition: the magnificent choral arrangement of Lo Yisa Goy he created to celebrate Rabbi Beifield’s retirement. The inspiration for his melodies “just happens in the most uncomfortable and strange moments” according to Natan. For Natan, music does not require motivation. He describes music and himself as “one and the same.” I cannot see how or why I would be separated from my music.”

Natan reflects that today’s Jewish music “goes in one of two directions: Jewish music has elements of contemporary music. It is easy to participate, easy to remember and most important it brings Jewish music and Jewish prayer to where people are.” Natan says that, “traditional style a la Fiddler on the Roof, brings Jewish music and prayer back to our musical genetic memories.”

Mr. B, as he known in his day job, is the choral director for Atlee High School’s outstanding show choirs. He teaches advanced choral music and currently has 230 students in 7 choral classes. All of his choirs participate in show choir competitions in Richmond and along East coast.

When Natan is not at Beth Ahabah or Atlee High school, he loves to be home with his family—his wife Valeria and his daughter Dina. He enjoys cooking, reading, science fiction and chess.

The President’s Message. Continued from Page 5

and Martin Miller. Also, many thanks to the lay leaders who are helping us enhance communications: Susan Gaible and Ron Kasoff, (co-chairs), Tanya Buresh-Werby, Bonnie Eisenman, Pam Feibish, Jon Field, Jeff Lavelle, Steven Longstaff, Kim Leibowitz, Susan Morgan, Ken Olshansky, Marsha Polier, and Linda Wren. Last but not least, tremendous gratitude to our incredible staff for their expertise, guidance and support.
CBA COMMUNITY

IN SYMPATHY TO THE FAMILIES OF....

Jane Lublin
sister-in-law of Bernard (Bobbie) Lublin

Irving Greenberg
uncle of David (Lesley) Greenberg

Wilda Hamerman
mother of Paul (Garnett) Hamerman

Marc Arenstein
brother of Dianne (Sherman) Master

Frances Heiner
aunt of Michael Schewel

Elbert Sampsell
father of Pamela (David) Feibish

MAZAL TOV!
GOOD NEWS & SIMCHAS TO:

Diane & Jim Jay on the engagement of their daughter, Leah Stuart Parker Jay to Allen Joseph Walsh Hicks.

Carole M. Weinstein, who was honored by the Library of Virginia as the recipient of its first Honorary Patron of Letters Degree at the 2016 Literary Awards.

Susan Meyers, who was honored by the Jewish Community Federation of Richmond as the recipient of the 2017 Woman of Valor Award.

BETH AHABAH SENIOR BRIDGE

Join Beth Ahabah Senior Bridge at the Joel House at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday evening, March 2, 2017 for information concerning Medicare from the Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (VICAP), which is part of a nationwide network of health insurance assistance Programs.

Locally, VICAP is sponsored by Senior Connections, The Capital Area Agency on Aging. Trained volunteer counselors assist Seniors with Medicare and help seniors and caregivers understand and Compare Medicare and other health insurance benefits. VICAP counselors provide information on:

- Medicare (for seniors and the disabled under 65 with Medicare)
- Medicare Supplemental Insurance
- Medicare Advantage
- Medicare Prescription Drug Plan (Part D)
- Extra help for Part D
- Long Term Care Insurance
- Medicare Savings Programs for help with Medicare premiums, deductibles and co-payments
- Understanding medical and insurance statements
- Filing claims and appeals

For more information contact: Rachel Schmidt via email at: rachelcohenschmidt@gmail.com

Kate Bellemman, daughter of Nancy and Scott, who garnered the 2017 Richmond Theater Artsie Award for Best Choreography for Green Day’s American Idiot at the Firehouse Theatre.
Eliana Pirron will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, December 3, 2016. She is the daughter of Michael Pirron and Shannon Griffin, and the sister of Talia and Naomi Pirron.

Eliana is a 7th grade homeschooler who half-time attends the French immersion program of Heartwood Grove School of the Arts in Richmond. She has studied violin for many years and participates in music recitals. Eliana also is extremely interested in working with children with disabilities. As such she has studied American Sign Language (ASL) and is conversational, and has been in SPARC’s Live Art program and annual show for the past three years which included such famous artists as Jason Mraz and Sara Bareilles for sold-out audiences at the Altria theater.

To further her passion, Eliana’s Mitzvah Project involves additionally volunteering with the Live Art program and working with children with disabilities, as she strives to make the performing arts accessible for all children.

Rose Tziporah Field will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on December 10, 2016. She is the daughter of Rebecca and Jon Field, and the sister of Lilah Field. She is the granddaughter of Bert and Rena Berlin of Richmond, VA and of Grant and Jean Field of Edgewater, Florida.

Rose is a 7th grade student at Orchard House School. She plays on her school basketball team, and enjoys art and music in her free time. Over the summer, she volunteered at the Richmond Food Bank, delivering meals to Richmond Public School children. Rose’s favorite subject in school is history, and she hopes to someday join the Peace Corps because she loves helping people. She looks forward to a career as an interior designer.

Her family is very proud of her and all of her hard work. They look forward to celebrating with Rose and all of her friends, family and congregation members who will help make this a wonderful occasion.

Jane Heffron will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on December 10, 2016. Jane is the oldest daughter of Richard and Dot Heffron. She is the granddaughter of Jason Heffron o.b.m. and Marcia Heffron, and Ronald and Mary Sue Smith.

Jane is a 6th grade student at Midlothian Middle School. She enjoys baking with her Grandma Mary Sue on the weekends and playing poker with her Grandma Marcia on Friday afternoons. She is the favorite babysitter of neighborhood children, and she creates beautiful cards and distributes them to lucky friends and loved ones on special occasions. Jane is an avid crafter and excels in decoupage, weaving and creating loom band bracelets. In her downtime, she enjoys playing games (both board and video) with her younger brother and sister, texting her friends like her life depends on it, and listening to music.

Jane’s Mitzvah Project is raising money for the adoption program at Jewish Family Services Richmond. Jane wants to help children and parents become families through adoption and is inspired to “pay it forward.” Jane is a blessing to
A Social Justice Gift Guide for Hanukkah

In search of a unique Hanukkah gift for the social justice hero in your life? Look no further than this guide for all your gift-giving need—with an emphasis on tikkan olam, the repair of our broken world.

1. Give Refuge to the Millions Fleeing Violence and Turmoil:
Few stories this year have captured global attention like the plight of refugees fleeing their homes – many from Syria and heading to Europe – in search of a better life for themselves and their families. HIAS is leading the Jewish community response to this crisis, and a gift to HIAS is a gift that will help assist refugees around the world.

2. Give Nothing But Nets:
This Hanukkah, help eliminate malaria death in sub-Saharan Africa by joining the UN Foundation and the Union for Reform Judaism’s Nothing But Nets campaign. With a $10 donation, you can provide a lifesaving bed net to families who have fled conflict and are living in refugee camps. Make a donation to help save lives today.

3. Give Books to Children in Need:
Women of Reform Judaism is partnering with Jewish Women International to bring books and comfort to some of the close to 15,000 children who are spending the holiday season in domestic violence shelters. For each $18 contribution, JWl will mail a Hanukkah card to any person you would like to honor, letting them know that they have inspired a gift that’s helping children in need.

4. The Gift of Music:
Have any musicians in your life? Have anyone who believes music can change the world? Give the ultimate social justice songbook—Tzedek Tirdof—featuring songs that resound with Jewish values and transcend personal boundaries. Start a (musical) revolution!

5. Give Thoughtful Travel:
Know someone who is always on the road? Whether it’s towels in your hotel room or the carbon emissions associated with your flights, buying offsets through the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism’s Travel Justly fund ensures environmental justice through our grant-making and advocacy work. As you travel this holiday season, give an additional present than just your presence.

6. Give Ethical Food:
The foodie in your family will love the healthy and ethically-sourced foods that come with a share in your local Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project, purchased through Hazon’s Tuv Hai’aretz Jewish CSA program or a farm near you. A few hundred dollars buys an entire season’s worth of nutritious food and the opportunity to connect with your community, Jewish values and the environment in the most delicious way!

7. Give Something Jewish:
When was that last time you gave some cool Judaica to someone? It’s Hanukkah, after all, so consider giving that Jewish social justice junkie in your life some fair trade Hanukkah gelt from Guilt Free Gelt or a new tallit (prayer shawl) or challah covering made by Guatemalan artisans receiving fair wages available at Fair Trade Judaica. Check out the fair trade jewelry at Bead for Life or the delicious coffee beans at Equal Exchange.

8. The Gift of Tikun Olam:
Honor a Jewish hero for justice by making a tax-deductible gift to the Union for Reform Judaism in his or her name. Your gift will provide funding for creative Reform Jewish programming and help ensure the continued growth and strength of Reform Judaism.

Looking for more ways to incorporate social justice into your Hanukkah celebration? Learn more about Ner Shel Tzedakah (“Candle of Righteousness”), a project in which families and individuals devote the sixth night of Hanukkah to learning about the problem of poverty.

This guide was compiled by the staff of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, the social action arm of the Reform Jewish Movement. Visit rac.org to learn more about Jewish social justice issues.

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I am so grateful for the generosity and good wishes upon my receiving the Elinor Bloom Marshall Humanitarian award.

Thank you for your support of Hadassah Hospital and its pace-setting healthcare advances.

Richard November
Beth Ahabah Teens: Elect to Explore Israeli Food, Jewish Arts

Teens in the Beth Ahabah Midrasha program are engaged in new curricula at each grade level. The 8th grade core is busy learning to build Jewish community, (one of the first lessons was how to put on a kippah without bending your elbows). The 10th grade is exploring Jewish customs and rituals, and the 10th grade Confirmation Class is learning all about Reform Judaism, God, the Holocaust, Israel and other faiths with Rabbi Nagel.

After core classes the three dozen students attend an elective of their choice. The Foods of Israel is a very popular choice. The teens, along with Brain Strauss, our Youth Engagement Specialist and Rabbi Nagel prepared steaming pans of shakshuka, creamy hummus, rounds of pita, savory bourekas and tasted the fruits and desserts of Israel.

The fine artists, led by Maddie McElgunn, spent several weeks creating beautiful batik challah covers inspired by traditional Jewish decorative arts. They also studied the life and work of Jewish artists like Roy Lichtenstein. The final group chose to learn about the history and significance of Jews in the dramatic arts of cinema, television and the stage, and dabbled in a bit of stagecraft as well. Future elective choices will include Basic Conversational Hebrew, The Afterlife, Israeli Rock Music and The Jewish Short Story and a reprise of the very popular Foods of Israel.

CBA Youth Groups

Beth Ahabah Senior Youth Group
Grade 8 through 12

Madrichim Social!!
Sunday, December 4

All Madrichim are invited to come hang out or stop by the Youth Lounge between 8:15 and 9:15 a.m. for free breakfast!

Annual Shul-In!
Saturday, December 10

Look out for more information as we get closer!

NFTY-MAR’s Winter Kallah
Tuesday, December 27 through Friday, December 30

Brian, our teen engagement specialist, will email more details as we get closer to the event. In the meantime, you can check midatlantic.nfty.org for more information on NFTY-MAR!

Save the dates for:
Jumology, Saturday, January 14
10th Grade L-Taken, Friday, January 27 through Sunday, January 29

Beth Ahabah Middle Schoolers
Grade 6 through 8

Shul-In!
Saturday, January 7

NFTY-MAR’s MAJYK
Friday, January 27 through Sunday, January 29

Specifically for kids in grades 6 through 8! Brian, our teen engage-
Sisterhood has been very busy this fall. First up on the calendar was the Rosh Hashanah luncheon. The women put together a great spread and everyone enjoyed the traditional holiday fare. We always enjoy making the goodies that are used during the high holidays. The busy world did not stop there.

Next up in that week was our monthly Friday night Congregational dinner. This dinner will be a monthly event, after the early services, on the first Friday. The menu will change each month noting that the featured items will be family friendly! All in the congregation are encouraged to attend, as the family atmosphere is a great way to end the week and begin Shabbat. After dinner, the kids are being entertained in the Joel House and the adults get to have some time to relax and enjoy some self-furnished adult beverage. The menu will change, but you can’t beat the price, $10.00 per each adult and the kids eat free. Please come join us, at the First Friday Congregational dinners. The Chefs want to cook for you.

Sunday arrived with the Sisterhood Brunch. We had 72 women come to greet our Rabbi’s wife, Rabbi Randi Nagel, and welcome her officially to the BA-WRJ community. Randi gave some words of wisdom about women of any Jewish community and that we can accomplish anything as a group that we choose to do. Let me take a minute to thank once again the women who make it look so easy.

Almost on top of the Brunch came Breakfast. Again we put together a spread in the Goldburg and everyone seemed to find something to satisfy them until their dinner reservations. I want to take a moment to thank all of the women who help put these events together. Without you we wouldn’t have had such successful events. Keep your eyes open for future events and chances to help with projects and events.

**NOTICE TO THOSE WHO ARE COLLECTING THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:**
- Modesty Bags—Quart size bags covered with duct tape.
- Lovies—small fringed and knotted fleece squares for the Children’s Hospital
- Sanitary supplies for Middle and Senior high school girls in the area.

There is now a large white box in the entrance way marked as Sisterhood Collection Box. Just deposit items in the box. Please put your name on the items you have donated. If you need directions for anything, please see the side of the box for instructions.

The Beth Ahabah -Women of Reform Judaism want you to know that we welcome any and all women and hope that you will join us at a Board meeting in the near future. In even months we are at Temple and odd months we are at Panera Willow Lawn. We begin at 7:00 p.m. and hope that you will join us and make any suggestions for a program, trip, or event. As the saying goes—WE NEED YOU!!

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**CBA Youth Groups...continued from Page 11**

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**Beth Ahabah Kids**
Grade 2 through 5

**Junior Youth Group Events**
Come join us for lunch and a special activity after Religious School! Sunday, December 4 & Sunday, January 22

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**Save the Dates:**

**Camp Day**
Sunday, December 4

**Hanukkah Party**
Sunday, December 11

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**Mid-Atlantic**

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**NFTY Mid-Atlantic**

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**NFTY-MAR!**

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**CBA Youth Groups**

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**CBA Youth Groups...continued from Page 11**
Beth Ahabah Men of Reform Judaism
by David Feibish
President Beth Ahabah Brotherhood/MRJ

SPIRITUAL, REWARDING AND BUSY…

Your Brotherhood is always busy… Along with our excellent Temple staff, Brotherhood, too, was well prepared for Rabbi Scott Nagel’s inaugural High Holy Days services.

Brotherhood is so appreciative of Jeff Lavelle, who on behalf of Brotherhood continues his outstanding leadership organizing, assigning and coordinating ushers for High Holy Day services.

Along with our longtime reliable usher volunteers, it was nice to see new participants who provided much-needed help handing out prayer books due to tremendous attendance at the services.

Next up, Sukkot. After High Holy days, Adam Beale led a Brotherhood group assembling our 15’x 36’ sukkah in the breezeway. While that was in process, Adam Nelson led both Brotherhood and Sisterhood volunteers in constructing the bimah sukkah in our main sanctuary. Special thanks to the Religious School teachers and their students who created beautiful decorations that brought life to the outdoor sukkah.

On Oct. 23rd Brotherhood enthusiastically sponsored and provided lunch for 75+ volunteer congregants (adults and children) who participated in the Stop Hunger Now project organized by the Tikkun Olam Committee.

Did I say busy……RSVP and/or SAVE THE DATES:

• Wednesday, 12/7 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.: Brotherhood is again sponsoring a Brews and Brotherhood social event. This will take place at the award-winning Strangeways Brewing at 2277A Dabney Road, close to Richmond's Near West End area. All adult male members of Beth Ahabah are welcome, but you need to RSVP.

• Sunday, Dec. 11, is Brotherhood’s annual [Hanukkah Party] Latke Extravaganza. We welcome volunteers to help with preparation and frying latkes for our Religious School families and other congregants.

• Friday, Jan. 13, 2017, Brotherhood Shabbat and Dinner.

• Saturday, Jan. 28, 2017 will be a fun family sporting event program. A Richmond Spiders home basketball game at the Robins Center with dinner before the game and access in one of the new event suites above the court!

Watch for your Beth Ahabah e-news, emails, fliers and announcement for details and contact info for all these events.

As always, we welcome your interest, inspiration, and especially your input for new ideas to further Brotherhood’s outreach to the men of our congregation.

Beth Ahabah Book Club

Upcoming meetings
held at the home of Katy Yoffy
at 7:00 pm

December 8, 2016
In the Courtyard of the Kabbalist
Ruchama King Feurerman

May 4, 2017
The Midwife of Venice
Roberta Rich

For more information, contact Katy at kyoffy@gmail.com.

Just in case you missed it, at our September 15th meeting we discussed The World to Come by Dara Horn

Tikkun Olam: Save the Dates

Caritas: December 10, 2016 through Friday, January 27, 2017
Contact Chuck Greenberg (cgre41@yahoo.com)

Mt. Moriah: Wednesdays, August 2016 through June 2017
Contact: Lynn Burris (ackmanrealty@gmail.com)
Volunteers needed to serve lunch for homeless every third Wednesday of the month. We are also in need of people willing to help with the cost of the lunches.
CBA LIFE:

Members of Sisterhood prepared and shared traditional holiday fare at their annual Rosh Hashanah luncheon.

Havurot in members' homes continue welcoming Rabbi Nagel to Richmond, aiding in his quest to meet and get to know every member of the congregation.

If you would like to host a Havurah, Havdalah, wine and cheese or other type of event at your home to help welcome Rabbi Nagel to the congregation, please contact Robert Freed via email at rfreed@freshlaw.com or call 804.330.5528, extension 223.
CBA LIFE:

Building the outdoor Sukkah with Brotherhood

Students in the 2nd - 5th grade Religious School classes made their own edible Sukkahs.

On Sunday, October 23 Beth Ahabah volunteers joyfully and efficiently packaged 10,000 meals for Stop Hunger Now, wrapping up the celebration of Sukkot.

Lunch for the Stop Hunger Now volunteers was provided by the Brotherhood.
CBA LIFE: Continued from page 16
HELP BUILD OUR FUTURE – JOIN THE LEGACY CIRCLE

Beth Ahabah is participating in the Life and Legacy program in partnership with the Richmond Jewish Foundation following Richmond’s selection to be part of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation’s national legacy gift initiative. A legacy gift to Beth Ahabah as part of your estate plan will help secure our future and strengthen our sacred community. In addition, we may qualify for substantial incentive grants from the Grinspoon Foundation based on the number of new legacy gifts we receive. Please contact one of the following members of the Beth Ahabah Legacy Circle team to find out how easy it is to make your legacy gift. We also would like to hear from you if you have already included Beth Ahabah in your estate plan so we can include you in the Legacy Circle.

Jim Weinberg (Jlweinberg@hf-law.com)
Rosann Bocciarelli (rbocciarelli@gmail.com)
Rob Davidson (rob.davidson@aftonchemical.com)
Katie Roeper (katie.roeper@gmail.com)
Jim Schuyler (jschuyler1@verizon.net)

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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 coming to you promptly—and save us postal fees.

We want to keep you posted!
**Hanukkah** is fast approaching and 2017 is just around the next corner. Yes, it’s the time of year when you may begin to hear a few rumblings of the amazingly zany and sometimes historical (maybe **hysterical** is a better way of putting it) rendition of the Book of Esther. Believe it or not, it is time to begin planning for Purim, and you know what that means……………

**PURIM SHPIEL 2017**

Congregation Beth Ahabah will proudly open the Goldburg stage curtain on March 12th for another fun celebration of the Purim holiday. Yes, we will once again put another twist on the Book of Esther and invite everyone to be part of Purim Shpiel 2017 - those of you who love being on stage, those of you who have never been on a stage before, and then everyone else in-between.

You may have seen past performances, so step out of your comfort zone and become part of our wonderful family of actors, actresses, creative designers, technicians, and stage hands. We are looking for congregants of (almost) all ages (from 6 to 96). This year’s theme has not been released yet (shhhhh, it’s still a secret) but it promises to be as much fun (if not more) than all the previous shows.

If you would like to be an actor, an actress, help with scenery, costumes, props, audio/video equipment; or if you want to dance or sing, then **WE NEED YOU** to be at the first meeting:

- **Sunday, January 15**\(^{th}\)
- 12pm - 2:30pm
- Goldburg Auditorium

Lunch and a fun afternoon are provided!

For additional information, please email or call Ken Roeper
roepers@comcast.net  804.658.1556
**Gifts That Make A Difference...**
Charitable Giving in honor of or in memory of a loved one is an important tradition for the Beth Ahabah congregation. For more information about giving opportunities, please visit the Temple website or call the Temple office at 804.358.6757. Thank you for your consideration.

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**First Fridays**
Something for Everyone! January 6th!

**Light Snack at 6:00pm**
**Shabbat Service with Kol Simchah at 6:15pm**
**Congregational Dinner at 7:00pm**
*BYOB. By Reservation. $10/Adult (children 18 and under are FREE)*
*Email a.shiflett@bethahabah.org or l.allen@bethahabah.org to make your reservation. You may call the temple office with credit card information or pay online at www.bethahabah.org.*

**Supervised Activities for Children at 7:30pm**
*Inflatable gaga, games and movies will be supervised so that parents may enjoy some adult conversation over dinner.*

*— Upcoming First Fridays Schedule —*
February 3rd • March 3rd • April 7th • May 5th

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**SAVE THE DATE FOR SPIDERS BASKETBALL!**
Saturday evening, January 28, 2017

Brotherhood is sponsoring a family outing to see the University of Richmond Spiders take on Duquesne in basketball at the Robins Center. Contact Jeff Lavelle (jeffrey.a.lavelle@dom.com) for more information and keep an eye out for more information coming soon!

---

**Beth Ahabah Loves Movies is Back!**
our first movie will be

**Little White Lie**
December 17th • 4:00pm • Joel House
Come Enjoy a Great Movie and Fun Refreshments with Friends!

Don’t miss these upcoming movies... and be sure to bring your friends!
January 21st • Above and Beyond
February 18th • Hunting Elephants

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Irvin & Linda Seeman
The birth of Reid Paulson Eisenman, grandson of Mike & Bonnie Eisenman
Katie & Ken Roeper
Charlotte Burton Sherman
Jim Weinberg receiving the VCIC Award
Scott & Nancy Belleman
Marcus Weinstein’s special birthday
Scott & Nancy Belleman
IN MEMORY OF:
Leona M. Rosenthal
Beth & Dan Rosenthal
Cheryll Nachman
Kenneth M. Nachman
Estelle Finer, my wife
Allen Finer
Sam Snyder & Sydney Kaplan, my brothers-in-law
Allen Finer
Gordon Mendelson, father of Mike Mendelson & Shannon Kelley
Katie & Ken Roepner
Alan Fleischer, father of Sydney Fleischer & Mike Camp
Katie & Ken Roepner
Wilda Hamerman
Scott & Nancy Belleman
Elaine Schein
Mark Schein
Hilde Blumenthal
Lynn B. Stevenson
Jerome Blumberg
Michael & Barbara Blumberg

Moses Early Sherman, Jr.
David Holland
Saul Viener
Jackie Viener
Hannah G. Rapp
Sheri Cox
Marc Arenstein
Katy & Jimmy Yoffy
Linda & Irvin Seeman
Myrna & Morton Norman
Leah Elkin
Katy & Jimmy Yoffy
Joseph Weiner, uncle-in-law
Russell Finer
Steven Finer, cousin
Russell Finer
Celia Yaffe, grandmother-in-law
Russell Finer
Steven Finer
Allen Finer
Jack Spinner
Howard Spinner
Shirley P. Plotkin, our loving mom
Cathy & Marvin Daniel
Morton N. Gary
Linda & Rick Gary
Morton Zell
Pamela & Michael Zell
Elbert Sampsell
Scott & Nancy Belleman
Katy & Jimmy Yoffy
Audrey Danoff
David & Ruby Jo Hiller
M. Paul Rogers
Charles Rogers
Phyllis Gurman
Barbara & Michael Blumberg
Dr. Irving Katz
Gloria Starkman
Solomon Mahler & Julius Altman
Linda & David Mahler
Jack Kreuter
Wendy Kreuter

IN HONOR OF:
The very special marriage blessing of
Emily A. Shapiro & Michael Mullaly
With love, Bob, Debbie & David Shapiro

IN MEMORY OF:
Gordon Mendelson
Laurie, Adam, Melissa & Lyndsay Nelson
Gordon Danoff, beloved father of
Ruby Jo Hiller
David & Ruby Jo Hiller
John Wagner, my beloved father
Patricia Dodson
Anne Marie Wagner, my sister
Patricia Dodson
Jane Lublin
Bernard Lublin
Anne Meyers
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CANTOR GOLDMAN
MUSIC FUND
IN HONOR OF:
Rabbi Spiro & Dr. Marilyn Spiro’s 60th wedding anniversary
Jim & Rachel Schmidt

IN APPRECIATION OF:
BethAhabah’s beautiful music
Rachel & Jim Schmidt

IN MEMORY OF:
Isaac Gorbaty, Hannah Haham & Moritz Berenshteyn
Valeria & Natan Berenshteyn
James Ebert
Barbara Ebert

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IN MEMORY OF:
Alan Fleischer
Mikki Evens

BETH AHABAH CARES FUND
IN MEMORY OF:
Alan Fleischer
Elayne Lavenstein Axel

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.
DID YOU KNOW?
Facts, Figures & Folklore about Hanukkah

Did you know...
that Hanukkah is referred to as the Festival of Lights?

Did you know...
that Hanukkah begins four days before the new moon, which is the darkest night of the month? Kislev, the month in which Hanukkah takes place, is also close to the winter solstice, which is the longest—and darkest—month of the year. The only ritual associated with Hanukkah is lighting the candles on the Hanukkiah. Like many other faiths, the holiday of Hanukkah brings light into the darkest time of the year.

Did you know...
that the eight-day holiday of Hanukkah falls anytime between the middle of November and the beginning of January? The date fluctuates because Hanukkah is set according to the Jewish calendar, which is lunar based. The holiday of Hanukkah begins on the 25th day of the Jewish month of Kislev.

Did you know...
that Hanukkah is one of the least religiously significant holidays in the Jewish calendar? The principle holidays of the Jewish faith include Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Passover and Shavuot. Due to its proximity to Christmas, however, Hanukkah has taken on greater prominence in the last century.

Did you know...
that giving gifts is not a tradition historically associated with Hanukkah? Again, the proximity to Christmas has rubbed off on Hanukkah celebrations—commercially speaking, at least.

Did you know...
that Hanukkah is a holiday that celebrates national and religious freedom? The story of Hanukkah dates back more than 2,000 years ago, when the Jewish people of Judaea were being ruled by a brutal Greek king named Antiochus. The Jewish people rose up against the king, restoring their Temple, removing the Greek idols and returning to the practice of their monotheistic faith.

Did you know...
that the Hanukkah story is not written about in the Torah? The principle event of the holiday, the battle between the Maccabees and the Greeks, is post-Biblical. It happened several hundred years after the Torah is believed to have been given to the Jewish people on Mount Sinai.

Did you know...
that the word Hanukkah means “dedication,” referring to the restoration of the Temple by the Maccabees after they defeated the Greeks? Unlike the monotheistic Jews, the Greeks practiced a pagan faith and had filled the Holy Temple with numerous idols.

Did you know...
that a menorah is actually a candelabrum with six branches? So, when someone says that they are going to light their Hanukkah menorah, they are technically mistaken. The eight-branched candelabrum that is lit on Hanukkah is correctly known as a Hanukkiah.

Did you know...
that the many Hanukkiahs have nine candle holders? There are eight equally spaced holders for each of the eight days of Hanukkah, along with a ninth holder for the helper candle, called the Shamash. The Shamash holder is typically separated from the other eight—either higher up or off to the side. The role of the Shamash is to light each of the other candles.

Did you know...
that the number of branches on the Hanukkiah is connected to a miracle said to have happened when the Maccabees restored the Temple? The Jews cleaned up the Temple, fixed the broken altar and removed all the Greek idols. Then, they went to light the eternal lamp to rededicate the Temple. There was only enough oil to last for one night, and the process of refining more oil would have taken a long time. Miraculously, however, the oil burned through eight nights.

Did you know...
that Jewish law commands every Jewish person to light his or her own Hanukkiah? This is why families will often own multiple Hanukkiohts (plural), with simple, wooden ones being used for younger children. Once all the hanukkiohts are lit, families recite a special prayer and sing songs about the brave Maccabees.

Did you know...
that many Jews have the tradition of placing their lit hanukkiah in a window, so that the twinkling lights may be seen by people walking (or driving) by? This tradition is intended to “illuminate”—or remind people about—the miracle that happened on Hanukkah.

Hanukkah...Continues on Page 23
Did you know...
that the *hanukkiah* is supposed to be lit at nightfall, except on the Sabbath, when the candles are lit immediately before sunset so that the Sabbath candles may be lit afterwards? The *Hanukkah* lights are supposed to remain illuminated for at least thirty minutes after dark. Olive oil was originally used to light the *hanukkiah*, but today many families opt for the less expensive option of brightly colored candles. These special *Hanukkah* candles are designed to burn for 40 minutes.

Did you know...
that the heroes of the *Hanukkah* story are known as the Hasmoneans or, more commonly, as the Maccabees? They were a rebel army led by four brothers, the sons of Mattathias the Cohen, a Jew from the priestly class.

Did you know...
that the term Maccabee comes from the Hebrew word for hammer? Legend tells that the Maccabees struck a hammer-like blow against their Grecian enemies.

Did you know...
that there is a tradition to eat oily foods on *Hanukkah* as a gastronomical reminder of the miracle of the oil that lasted for eight days? In Israel, the food of choice is a deep-fried jelly donut. In North America and Europe, *latkes*—fried potato pancakes—are commonly enjoyed.

Did you know...
that a game of chance known as *dreidle*—or *sivivon* in Hebrew—is played on *Hanukkah*? The *dreidle* is a four-sided top, which is passed around and spun by each of 2 to 4 players. The letter that the top lands on determines how much of the pot of pennies (or chocolate coins) one wins or loses.

**Hanukkah Blessings**

Candles are added to the *hanukkiah* (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.

Source: http://www.reformjudaism.org
HEBREW CEMETERY FUND  
IN HONOR OF:  
Asher Isaac Harris, who was buried with your help, your kindness, & your generosity. Our family can never repay you for the dignity you gifted my son in death.  
Angela Harris  
IN LOVING MEMORY OF:  
Lynn Rubens Wolf, my dear sister Marjorie Osterweis Rubens, my adored mother  
Joseph M. Rubens, Jr., my adored father  
Jane C. Rubens  
Jean LePage  
Betty Sue & Todd LePage  
Jerome Gumenick  
Betty Sue & Todd LePage  
Harry Grandis  
Nancy Grandis White

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IN HONOR OF:  
Jack & Marilyn Spiro’s 60th wedding anniversary  
Tim & Pat Paul  
IN MEMORY OF:  
William Cliett, my dad  
Vicki & Miles Lynn

GENERATIONS FUND  
IN HONOR OF:  
The marriage of Shepard Roeper & Kelly Griffin  
Shannon Kelley & Mike Mendelson  
The birth of Reid Paulson Eisenman  
Scott & Nancy Bellemann  
IN MEMORY OF:  
Alan Fleischer  
Mikki Evens  
Ronald M. Plotkin  
Cathy & Adam Plotkin  
Eleanor Aarts, grandmother to  
Aaron & Michelle Pinsky, mother of  
Linda Pinsky  
Jeffrey & Linda Pinsky

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IN MEMORY OF:  
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MUSEUM & ARCHIVES  
IN HONOR OF:  
The Birthdays of Millie & Herb Heltzer  
Carol and Tom Kelley  
Herbert Heltzer’s Award as 2015 Richmond Times-Dispatch Correspondent of the Year  
Erwin and Harriette Will  
IN MEMORY OF:  
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Donna Lisa Carter-Thomas  
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Do you have an interest in marketing, social media, photography or journalism?  
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Contact Ron Kasoff at rkassoff@aol.com or Russ Finer at rfiner@bethahabah.org for more details.

Have You Connected Yet?  
BethAhabahConnect is a great way to network with other members of the Beth Ahabah community!  
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Time to Advertise?  
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Winter months bring memories of Hanukkah lights brightening up the dark, cool nights. The Confirmation class of 1967 gave this lovely Hanukkah Menorah to the Archives as a class gift. In 1967, the Archives was being formally established and this gift was to be put on display in the new Museum. The menorah was made in Poland in the 19th century and is composed of brass. This Hanukkah seems unusual in that it has two “servant” candles. It has been thought that these candles were used for Sabbath lights on the one or two Shabbats during the eight day festival of Hanukkah. They could also have been used for Shabbat during other times of the year. In fact, many Hanukkiah made during this time period had twin servant lights.

As we enter into 2017, the 1967 class will be marking the 50th anniversary of their Confirmation. Are you or a family member in this class? Call (353-2668) or email us (bama@bethahbah.org) to share a memory and we will add it to the class file.

19th Century Polish Hanukkah Menorah
Here's to the Moon!
by David Farris, director

Sometimes the old ways are enough, or maybe even better.

In my last column I wrote about realizing that the High Holidays were approaching when a member of the Temple staff came to get the white Torah mantles we preserve and store for the Congregation. It occurs to me that there are other, more subtle, indicators of the flow of time between events, both religious and secular.

For example, we are in the midst of that time of year when we commuters need the air conditioner only in the afternoon. This is closely followed by a period of time when we don’t need it at all, then by one when it is heater mornings and nothing afternoons, then heater for both. This is a subconscious method of tracking the change of seasons, and maybe these indicators are more valuable than calendar-watching. I am finding that while I still depend on my paper calendar for schedules on a daily basis, I rarely refer to it for broader matters such as when the seasons change.

We all know about the Jewish calendar, and many of us have them in our homes and offices. If we study them, we discover that all of the holidays occur when the moon is full. This made good sense to the Jews who created it long ago, as their agrarian lives were regulated by the planting and harvesting seasons, which in turn were marked by full moons. We Virginians are lucky to be able to witness the full moon rising out of the Atlantic Ocean. This is a spectacular sight, and one not to be missed.

Our daily calendar is called the “Gregorian” calendar, named after Pope Gregory although it does not appear that he had anything to do with its creation. Maybe he funded the effort and gained naming rights, like King James did for that bible translation. While it is good for most things, it is inaccurate enough to require the insertion of one extra day nearly every four years in accordance with a formula. This makes it more accurate than any of its predecessors, but it is still off by one day every 3,236 years. That’s close enough for me.

Since the lunar year is 11 days shorter than the solar year used by the Gregorian calendar, the Jewish calendar requires that a “leap month” be inserted every two or three years, or seven times in a 19-year cycle. These leap months keep the calendar in step with the astronomical seasons and make sure that the religious observances occur at the correct time of the year, as mentioned in the Torah. A child born on February 29th goes three or four years between actual birthdays, but of course parents ignore this and celebrate annually. A child born in a Jewish calendar’s leap month can go even longer between actual birthdays, but this is also ignored for celebration purposes.

I have avoided changing over to the digital calendars available on my desktop computer, cellphone and iPad, as they do not allow me to enter much in the way of details. With my paper calendar, I can visualize that there is something written down for a Friday afternoon, though I may have to refer to the actual page for the details. At the same time, I seem to be relying more on my senses for information on seasonal things. My paper calendar never crashes, and data never vanishes mysteriously when I have done nothing. Fumble-fingering does nothing more than create something easily eradicated by one of those old-fashioned pink rubber erasers.

So here’s to the moon, the change of seasons, and to paper calendars. Sometimes older methods and things are sufficient, if not better. Visit us at the Museum & Archives at 1109 W. Franklin, Sundays through Thursdays from 10 - 3. Bonnie has some excellent new calendars in our Judaica Shop produced by the Museum Stores of Richmond. Our number is 353-2668 if you would like to call.
CBA Calendar December 2016/January 2017

Friday, December 2
First Friday Shabbat Service – Come As You Are
Snack 6:00 PM
Service 6:15 PM
Dinner (Reservations Required) 7:00 PM
Activities for kids in the Joel House 7:30 PM

Saturday, December 3
Bat Mitzvah of Eliana Pirron 10:30 AM

Sunday, December 4
Religious School 9:15 AM
Parent Social: First Steps, Kindergarten, 1st & 2nd Grades

Monday, December 5
Midrasha Monday 6:00 PM

Friday, December 9
Shabbat Service 7:30 PM

Saturday, December 10
B’not Mitzvah of Rose Field and Jane Heffron 10:30 AM

Sunday, December 11
Religious School 9:15 AM

Monday, December 12
Midrasha Monday 6:00 PM

Friday, December 16
Shabbat Service celebrating Sam Feder’s Bar Mitzvah 7:30 PM

Saturday, December 17
Tot Shabbat 9:30 AM
Beth Ahabah Loves the Movies 4:00 PM

Friday, December 23
Shabbat Service in Gumenick Chapel 6:15 PM

Friday, December 30
Shabbat Service in Gumenick Chapel 6:15 PM

Monday, January 2
Midrasha Monday 6:00 PM

Friday, January 6
First Friday Shabbat Service – Come As You Are
Snack 6:00 PM
Service 6:15 PM
Dinner (Reservations Required) 7:00 PM
Activities for kids in the Joel House 7:30 PM

Sunday, January 8
Religious School 9:15 AM

Monday, January 9
Midrasha Monday 6:00 PM

Friday, January 13
Brotherhood Shabbat Dinner 6:00 PM
Brotherhood Shabbat Service 7:30 PM

Sunday, January 15
Religious School 9:15 AM
Sixth Grade Gesher

Friday, January 20
Learners’ Shabbat Service 7:30 PM

Sunday, January 22
Religious School 9:15 AM

Monday, January 23
Midrasha Monday 6:00 PM

Friday, January 27
Shabbat Service w/Adult Choir 7:30 PM

Sunday, January 29
Religious School 9:15 AM

Submit an Article to the Next Issue of B’Yachad

ISSUE DATE: FEBRUARY/MARCH 2017
DEADLINE TO SUBMIT: Friday, December 23
Please send editorial submissions and advertising artwork to susan@susanwmorganpr.com

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Meg Marshak, WRJ President
David Feibish, MRJ President

This beautiful batik challah cover was created by teen artists participating in the Religious School’s Midrasha program. The design was inspired by traditional Jewish decorative arts. Read more about the Midrasha program’s new curriculum on page 11.