



CONGREGATION BETH AHABAH B'YACHAD

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JOIN US FOR A JOYOUS CELEBRATION OF PURIM



PURIM



Rabbi Scott Nagel
Sophia and Nathan Gumenick Senior Rabbi

The basic story of *Purim* is well-known: how King Ahasuerus of Persia let himself be influenced by the wicked counselor Haman to order the annihilation of all the Jews in his vast empire, and how the Jews were saved by the resourcefulness of Mordechai and his niece, Queen Esther.

Historically, it is questionable whether

any such episode occurred exactly as it is reported in the Book of Esther. However, it is quite possible that the festival of *Purim* does go back to some actual incident in the history of the Persian Jews, since we have observed *Purim* as a major holiday since ancient times.

Purim, in the early spring, and *Simchat Torah* in the fall, about six months apart, have historically functioned as social release valves within the Jewish community. One can, with official sanction, drink so much he cannot think clearly. Nothing is black and white. All is grey. On *Purim* the world is turned upside down. Students can openly poke fun at their teachers, the poor

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TIKKUN OLAM

TIKKUN OLAM COMMITTEE

The Doorways

"Between healing and home," are four words that succinctly describe the mission of The Doorways. The Doorways provides low-cost housing to patients undergoing a variety of medical experiences at nearby hospitals, their families and their caregivers.

On Thursday, November 17th, members of the Tikkun Olam Committee served a dinner of chicken cacciatore, brown rice and garden salads to residents there. Prior to the event, on Wednesday, November 15th, another group of volunteers prepared the dinner entrees in the Beth Ahabah kitchen. The main courses were then transported to The Doorways to be served later in the week.

To serve the meal on November 17th, several members of the Tikkun Olam Committee and CBA volunteers met at 5:30 pm to ready the dining area, re-heat the entree and toss the salad. Bread and desserts were provided by area food stores.



The Doorways residents, guests and staff were very appreciative of our efforts. In a time of societal discord, what the people of CBA did demonstrates what people of our faith, good intent, determined purpose and love for our fellow mankind can accomplish.

In December, we celebrated the birthday of the Prophet Mohammad, Christmas and Hanukkah. Perhaps the one refrain should be, "God bless us, each and every one."

To the Members of Congregation Beth Ahabah,

When community forms around an idea, task or mission, people discover one another in new and meaningful ways. Strangers become acquaintances and acquaintances become friends. Bridging RVA is all about connecting individuals, groups and causes to advance common good in our community.

Due to the closing of the Freedom House in 2012, the annual Christmas Day Dinner in Richmond also came to an end. After learning of this void in our community, Bridging RVA decided to bring the dinner back to our city in 2015. We all agreed that Christmas is a culturally significant time of the year. Regardless of one's theology or religion, we believe a Christmas Day Dinner advances the common good by feeding the hungry; and promoting goodwill and peace among ALL people.

We are extremely grateful for Congregation Beth Ahabah, who made their beautiful place of worship available as the venue for the 2016 Christmas Day Dinner. We are also grateful for the 150 volunteers, 38 individual donors and 9 corporate donors who contributed to the effort. At the end of the day, the 2016 Christmas Day Dinner was a huge success! More than 500 people were fed and hundreds of toys were given out to children.

It was a beautiful example of people coming together to advance common good. Here is a link to a video that captured the moments and smiles of the day: https://youtu.be/SG_nY1uAjkY

On behalf of Bridging RVA's Board of Directors, thank you for your openness and hospitality.

Kind Regards,

John Sawyer

Bridging RVA Board Chairman

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:



Russell M. Finer, FSA
Executive Director

The Hebrew Cemetery Committee of Richmond

Many members ask where our historic congregational cemetery is located and what is involved in purchasing a plot? Well, Hebrew Cemetery is on Hospital Street between Fourth and Fifth Streets. Hebrew Cemetery provides traditional grave sites with either flat or raised headstones in a setting that is conducive to peace, solace and meditation. There are also sites available for cremation urns.

Our congregational cemetery is another aspect of our common support and shared concern for every member. Remember, too, by making arrangements now, you will spare members of your family the anxiety and stress of making such a decision on their own during trying times.



Victorian-era headstones at Hebrew Cemetery

When you are ready to discuss your needs or would like to visit Hebrew Cemetery, we invite you to make an appointment by calling me or chairman, Bill Thalhimer, III at the Temple office.

BUDGET SEASON IS UPON US

A Message from the Treasurer

Lee D. Katz

Budget season is upon us and the Finance Committee is hard at work guiding the staff, lay leaders, and program committees through the annual budget process. Budgets serve two primary purposes as they help provide a blue print for the congregation to follow based on expected income and expenses and also serve as a key control to ensure financial discipline within our organization. In addition to preparing an annual budget, the Finance Committee will also take a longer term financial view and estimate our financial picture over a three to five year period. This longer term view will help our leadership with evaluating alternatives and assessing the impact in such important areas as staffing models, alternative dues structures and new and innovative programming ideas. We look forward to presenting a sound financial plan to the congregation at the Annual Meeting in May and providing tools to assist our leadership in evaluating important decisions for the Congregation.

Jewish Music from Around the World

By Sarah Beck-Berman, Cantorial Soloist

Don't miss this once-a-year opportunity to hear examples of Jewish music from around the globe!

As part of my ongoing Cantorial studies, I have continued to learn as much as I can about the many different cultures and traditions of Jewish music across the centuries, and across the globe. There is so much diversity in Jewish music, much of which we are not exposed to in our day-to-day lives.

Friday, March 31 will be a special opportunity to hear examples of different global Jewish musical traditions, and learn about them!

During the *Torah* service that evening, I will chant that week's *Torah* verses in several styles: first, our "normal" one (which comes from an Eastern European/Ashkenazi style), and then in a few other styles, including Western European/Ashkenazi (featured during the Brotherhood service this past January), an Iraqi style, and a Moroccan style.

Then, following the *Torah* service, we will explore Global Jewish music traditions as they have developed in different areas of the world, with musical examples of course!

I am very excited to once again present this taste of Jewish music from around the world in March, and I hope you are able to join us during services that evening.



Left to Right: An oud (pronounced ood, as in food) is a stringed instrument similar to a lute used in many Middle Eastern Jewish traditions; and a darbuka, or doumbek, a type of goblet drum used in Middle Eastern and North African Jewish music.

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can mock the rich, the weak can deride the powerful and we can all pretend to be someone else.

The *Megillat Esther*, or Scroll of Esther, from which *Purim* derives, is one of the latest books in the *TANACH*, the Jewish Bible, and was only placed within our canon after much debate by the rabbis in the late first century of the Common Era. It is universally regarded as a comic novella as it is historically implausible, frivolous, and bawdy. It does, however, give us the foundation and authorization for the observance of *Purim*.

There are three main themes in the Book of Esther.

The first is based on Haman's complaint to King Ahasuerus about the Jews. He tells the king (Esther 3:8), "There is a certain people, scattered and dispersed among the other peoples in all the provinces of your realm, whose laws are different from those of any other people and who do not obey the king's laws—and it is not in your Majesty's interest to tolerate them." While the charge that we do not obey the king's laws was a blatant lie, the Jews were different from every other people within the realm. Haman was choosing to practice the age old custom of tyrants everywhere, to direct the hostility of the government and populace against a small minority of people who are different from the majority. Haman was obviously foiled in his effort to destroy the Jews, but other tyrants have not been so easily defeated. We learn from this that we must always strive to protect those who are different, those small minorities whom it is easy to oppress. Our best protection as Jews is to protect others who are targets of prejudice and discrimination.

The second theme is a dominant one in Jewish life—when ever and where ever we have lived, we have emulated the habits and customs of the majority culture. In this country, we are thoroughly and completely American. Our music, dress, and language, and our attitudes all reflect our complete immersion within 21st century American life. Jews throughout the ages lived with the tension of being different and being part of the societies in which we sojourned. Jewish life and culture has always reflected the time and place in which we live. The secret to Jewish survival is maintaining our differences while simultaneously living like everyone else.

The third point is unique to the Book of Esther and the holiday of *Purim*. Esther is the only book in the Bible in which God is not mentioned. Nowhere in our text does God appear, yet God's hand invisibly guides all the actions of



Mordechai and Esther. This reminds us that even if God is not imminent in our lives, God works in and through us to bring goodness and light into the world. We see God through our actions, in the small and large acts of goodness we perform each and every day. This is one of *Purim*'s greatest lessons, one that permeates our existence as Jewish human beings.

Randi joins me in wishing everyone a Happy and Joyous *Purim*. May we all share in God's work by sharing joy and laughter with all this month of Adar.

Joyfully,
Rabbi Scott Nagel

A Warm Welcome to Our New Members!

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

David Cohn
Donna Poland
Richard & Lawrence Gordon

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

Inspiring Jewish Lives— Building Sacred Community: What Lies Ahead

By Katie Roeper, Congregational President

It's always a little challenging to write an article that won't be published for several weeks. It forces us to look beyond the immediate future and consider what will be most relevant two months down the road. Today is actually January 1st, the secular new year—a day that encourages us to look forward. In keeping with this tradition, I am looking forward to the coming months and what I hope to accomplish before the end of my term in May. Here are a few of the highlights:

Innovation Teams have met several times since last summer—identifying goals, objectives, and action steps. Priorities have been assigned, based on feasibility and potential level of impact, with an intention to be inclusive of all demographics in our congregational community. There are common themes and cross-cutting goals, which will now be compiled into a comprehensive Strategic Plan to guide us over the coming years.

Committee structure will be examined to determine where we have gaps, based on the new strategic plan. Small groups will be designed to provide opportunities for members to work on specific programs or ideas, offering them flexibility, focus on greatest interest, and less time commitment than committee work.

Parking in the city is no easy feat on Sunday mornings yet more and more families want to engage in Sunday morning activities. While this topic was raised during the charettes, it was not feasible to build additional parking into the plans for renovation and new

construction. In looking around town, however, it seems that city churches have come up with some innovative ways to secure parking on Sunday mornings. We should be able to do the same. A small group of families have agreed to take the lead in exploring creative alternatives and working with Richmond City to seek a solution for our members.

Budgeting has been somewhat of a “chicken and egg” dilemma for Beth Ahabah. We have at times, set the budget and asked committees to design programs accordingly. We have also asked committees to set the budget and submit to the finance committee, who then is charged with figuring out how to balance income and expenses. This year, we are taking a hybrid approach by asking committees to prioritize their budget requests, based on alignment with the vision. This will give better guidance to the Finance Committee when tough decisions need to be made.

Development will take a more coordinated approach. We will be restructuring development efforts to strengthen all fundraising to include Giving Circles (annual giving), special projects, Life and Legacy planned giving; and future phases of the campaign. We will be working with small groups to coordinate communication, donor cultivation and donor recognition and create a collaborative plan to serve as a roadmap for future development.

We will strengthen communication and support Religious School families by training all teachers on Beth Ahabah Connect. This important tool will be used for all future communications between teachers and families and to connect all adult members according to areas of interest. If you have not yet signed up, please contact Lori Allen at the Temple office to learn how easy it is!

Plans to break ground for renovations and new construction are projected for late spring, providing final approvals are granted by Richmond City. We look forward to planning an event that mirrors the inclusive approach established in the fundraising phase of the campaign.

Getting Involved—If any of these areas spark interest with you, please contact Katie Roeper to learn how to make an impact in the future of our congregation.

Beth Ahabah: Inspiring Jewish Lives—Building Sacred Community.

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.





VOICES

DEBRA GARDNER



When I was about to turn 60 and planning to retire from almost 30 years practicing law, I had a major problem. What was I going to do? My brain was going to turn to mush! I was having lunch with a friend and expressed my concerns. She suggested I join her at her bridge lesson. I had learned to play in college where the game and I had an intense relationship. After marrying David, we played a lot as a young couple, but as we began to have serious family and career responsibilities, we would play just once or twice a year. But I was curious and accepted her offer.

It turned out bridge had really changed! It was still a partnership card game divided into two parts: bidding and playing, but that was about all that was familiar. I enjoyed the lessons and the challenges they presented. I even began to review the homework - leading David to comment that if had

I studied this much in college I would have come out with a PhD! After several months, I asked my teacher about a mentor and she had the perfect one in mind for me.

In addition to my weekly lesson, I played once a week with my mentor and we spent almost two hours after the game going over the hands we had just played. Soon other people began asking me to play. I was serious about learning and willing to study, so my partners were patient. I am not a natural card player but I figured if I worked hard and studied it would make up for whatever deficits I had.

I have progressed to the point where I want to return the generosity others have shown me, so I became a certified bridge teacher this summer and now have 8 beginning students. In addition to teaching the mechanics of the game, I hope to impart what a truly

elegant game bridge is. It can be played socially with two couples enjoying a bottle of wine or it can be fiercely competitive. You can play it with a basic understanding of the game and never advance further than that, or spend a lifetime learning its intricacies.

My brain turn to mush? Ha! Not as long as I can play bridge!

This is 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 at Beth Ahabah, 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

FEATURING... THE SOPRANOS

NO, not those Sopranos...the ladies of the Adult Choir. Each issue, we will feature a different section of the choir. St. Augustine said, "he who sings, prays twice." My feelings exactly. It is why I choose to sing. We asked the choir members how long they have sung in the choir, why they sing, how singing impacts their families and what they do when not in the choir. Here are the results:

Sarah Blankenship is a veteran singer having started her career in the Junior Choir in 1986. She has been a member of the Adult Choir since 1999.

Sarah describes her love of singing as a "meaningful spiritual experience" and "a way to give back." Singing is a commitment which impacts her family. They are super fans, but it means "sitting with the choir instead of my family." Sarah's day job embraces her passion for creativity. She is a marketing/ coordinator/graphic designer/photographer for Caldwell Baker. She is also a jewelry designer and artist in her spare time when she is not volunteering with the Boy Scouts as an Assistant Scout Master. In addition, Sarah is a beloved Religious School teacher of K-2.

Fern Cohen is one of the "original" choir members having sung for 23 years. She says that "singing makes my spirits soar." Fern's musical career started at Brith Achim in Petersburg as a member of the Junior Choir. "Music has always been a part of my life. My mother played the piano and we would sing along." Fern is a semi-retired speech pathologist. She volunteers with RVA aphasia group, Hadassah's Check-It-Out Program and is a reader for the



Front Row: (left to right) Kat Sinclair, Sarah Blankenship, Rebecca Eichelbaum, Fern Cohen; 2nd row: (left to right) Rachel Schmidt, Laura Savage; (left to right) 3rd row: Holly Jordan, Laura Petrella.

Virginia Voice. Fern's hobbies include theater, opera and the arts. "I love life!"

Rebecca Eichelbaum joined the choir 4 years ago. She "loves music." Rebecca is a self described "homemaker" whose hobbies include her children, dance art and walking. "Choir has become an important part of my life. I enjoy the choir members and Natan."

Holly Jordan has given her beautiful voice to the soprano section since 1994. As a professional, she is a choral instructor in the Chesterfield Public schools. She is a frequent soloist and section leader at St Paul's Episcopal church. When not singing, Holly enjoys her sons, Ian and Collin.

Rachel Schmidt has dreams of becoming a cantor. It's never too late. She has somewhat fulfilled this longing by singing for the last 20 years with the Adult Choir. Rachel has been our "Cantorial soloist" during summer services. "Singing is the best way to connect with God." Rachel is a senior

coordinator in her day job. She loves dogs.

Laura Savage started singing every *Shabbat* morning in the youth choir at Temple Beth Emeth (PS it still exists). She has been a member of the adult choir for over 30 years. "Music is the spiritual way in which to connect and embrace Shabbat." Her mother had a great impact on her love for music. There was always music in the home as her mother played piano and was the music teacher at Religious School. Laura's husband and daughter are "faithful fans" ever present in the third row cheering her on with "smiles and pride." Laura retired from VCU after 30 years as an advanced practice nurse only to be coaxed back a year ago. Her passions include volunteering and travel.

Kathryn "Kat" Sinclair joined the choir 4 years ago. Singing "brings her joy and is the most meaningful way to pray." Kat says her family "has no idea

The Sopranos...continues on Page 15

CBA COMMUNITY



IN SYMPATHY TO THE FAMILIES OF....

Ellis Abrams

Selma Levy

grandmother of Lara (Jeff) Lavelle

Dorothy Holzbach

mother-in-law of Beryl Holzbach

Rick Morgan

husband of Susan Morgan

father of Aaron & Evan Morgan

Mabel May Hull

mother of Rita (Carter) Buxbaum

Ida Wagner

mother of Patricia Dodson

Nancy Segal

wife of Jeff Segal

mother of Jessica, Jacob & Anne Segal

Murray Lowenstein

Gladys Lehman

sister of Minnie Held &

Gloria Weiner Adams

Frances Smith

mother of Debbie (John) Cook

MAZAL TOV! GOOD NEWS & SIMCHAS TO:

Deborah Greenberg on the birth of her grandson, William Kevin Reed born November 22, 2016. Also to great-grandmother, Mikki Evens and parents, Brendan Reed & Dr. Emily Caplan Reed of McLean, Virginia.

BETH AHABAH SENIOR BRIDGE

Transportation = independence. Many seniors who do not like to drive consider themselves a burden to others, especially when they cannot access public transportation (and only 4% of the elderly use public transportation). Most people hate to ask for help, so they will just do without going out. The availability of transportation enables older persons to live independently in their communities, helps to prevent isolation and the possible need for long-term care placement.

We can meet this need by volunteering once a year to drive a congregational senior to and from services. Please consider being a part of this mitzvah!

Reminder: Thursday March 2, 2017 6:30 p.m. @ Joel House information concerning **Medicare** from the **Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program**. Trained volunteer counselors assist with Medicare and help seniors and caregivers understand Medicare and other health insurance benefits.

Planning Ahead: Tuesday April 18, 2017 6:00 p.m. @ Joel House **Care Givers Appreciation Dinner**, details to follow!

Rachel Schmidt, Senior Bridge coordinator

rachelcohenschmidt@gmail.com

804.690.8439

Coffee & Adam Bourne on the birth of their son, Judah Elon Bourne, born December 15, 2016

Bonnie & Ron Kasoff on the birth of their grandson, Hunter Colin Benjamin born December 4, 2016. Also to parents, Sarah & Zack Benjamin of Northern, Virginia.

Marcia & Harry Thalhimer on the birth of their granddaughter, Rose Antoinette Thalhimer born November 15, 2016. Also to parents, Michael & Alyson Thalhimer of St. Paul, Minnesota, uncle, Andrew Thalhimer and grandparents, David & Doris Hoel.

Barbara D. Boyan, who will be inducted as a 2016 National Academy of Inventors Fellow.

B'NEI MITZVAH IN FEBRUARY & MARCH



Nathan Aschheim
Saturday, February 25

Nathan Litow Aschheim will be called to the *Torah* as a *Bar Mitzvah* on February 25th, 2017. He is the son of Shari Litow and David Aschheim, the brother of Seth Litow Aschheim and the grandson of Joseph and Madeleine Litow and Barbara and Peter Aschheim.

Nathan is in 7th grade at St. Christopher's School and has been a member of Beth Ahabah since the age of eight. At school, Nathan enjoys math, woodworking and science. Outside of school, Nathan enjoys playing soccer on the FC Richmond soccer team, playing tennis, hiking and biking. His family and friends would say that he is funny, friendly, happy and enjoys solving problems.

For his *Mitzvah* Project, Nathan plans to do work that will better the lives of US Military Veterans.



Jake Weiss
Saturday, March 11

Jake Kenneth Lightfoot Weiss will be called to the *Torah* as a *Bar Mitzvah*. He is the son of David and Mackenzie Weiss and brother of Alexis Weiss. He is the grandson of Ken and the late Mary Bo Gassman of Richmond, and Harriet Weiss and the late Gary Weiss of Orlando, Florida.

Jake is a 7th grader at Pocahontas Middle School. He is first string for his weight class on the school wrestling team. In his free time he enjoys skateboarding, gaming and creating cool inventions. Jake is a neighborhood favorite as he has a special way with younger children and always finds a way to include them in "big kid" activities. He has a kind heart and is always helping those in need in various ways. His favorite subject in school is science. Following in the family footsteps, he is a huge fan of the Florida Gators and aspires to attend University of Florida for college. He is thinking of becoming an architect as an adult.

His family is very proud of the hard work he has done to prepare for his *Bar Mitzvah*. His family and friends are all looking forward to celebrating with Jake on this very special occasion.



Mannix Green
Saturday, March 18

Mannix Green will be called to the *Torah* as a *Bar Mitzvah* on March 18, 2017. Mannix is the son of Carolyn Dean and Lonny Green, and brother to Galen, Stenzler, Thomas, Knaide and Quinn. He is the grandson of Janet O'Connor and the late Dr. Philip Dean, and the late Shirley Green and the late David Green.

Mannix is a 7th grade student in the International Baccalaureate program at Moody Middle School. He is on the Moody Middle School soccer, basketball and track teams and swims for the Dominion Club in the summer. Mannix loves music and plays tenor saxophone in the middle school band. Mannix enjoys school, sports, family time and playing his sax and his ukulele.

For his *Mitzvah* Project, he has implemented a program in his school collecting gently used jeans to donate to homeless shelters.

We are very proud of Mannix, and look forward to celebrating this *simcha* with his family, friends and the congregation.

Sign up to Receive "Ten Minutes of Torah"

Sign up to receive a one page email each day on a topic of Jewish interest from URJ. It only takes 10 minutes a day to get started on a lifelong journey.

<http://www.reformjudaism.org/sign-receive-ten-minutes-torah>



Nicole Brager
Saturday, March 25

Nicole Brager will be called to the Torah as a *Bat Mitzvah* on Saturday, March 25. She is the daughter of Sharon and Rob Brager, and the sister of Erica and Corinne. She is the granddaughter of Madelene and Stan Brager of Potomac, Maryland, and Phyllis and Bill Scott of Berwyn, Pennsylvania.

Nicole is a 7th grader at Orchard House School. She likes to play sports, and is on a year round travel soccer team, her school basketball team, and plays tennis in the summer. In her free time, Nicole enjoys writing stories, hanging with friends, listening to music, and watching Netflix. She and her dad volunteer together in monthly community service projects with her friends from Orchard House. For her *Mitzvah* Project, Nicole is volunteering in various activities with the residents at The Virginia Home. Her favorite subject is science. She's always been good at building things, and hopes to one day be an engineer or an architect, or maybe a writer.

As the last of nine grandchildren on both sides of the family, we are very proud of Nicole and all of her hard work on becoming a *Bat Mitzvah*.

mazal tov!

PURIM SOCIAL JUSTICE GUIDE

<http://www.reformjudaism.org/purim-social-justice-guide>

In spite of, or perhaps because of, its fun-filled celebrations and traditions, *Purim* remains a holiday about social justice. The commandments to eat, drink and be merry are accompanied by the *mitzvah* of giving *matanot l'evyonim* (gifts to the poor) and *tzedakah* (literally "justice," but understood as "charity"). In the Book of Esther, we read, "The same days on which Jews enjoyed relief from their foes and the same month which had been transformed for them from one of grief to joy and from mourning to festival, they were to observe them as days of feasting and merry-making, and as an occasion for sending gifts (*misloach manot*) and presents to the poor (*matanot l'evyonim*)" (Esther 9:22).

In giving *matanot l'evyonim* on *Purim*—and in the larger sense of pursuing social justice—we recognize the need to address the inequalities we see in our society. By engaging in social action on *Purim*, we hope to help erase the hierarchy of the haves and the have-nots in our world. During this time of revelry and fun, of forgetting our usual inhibitions and turning our usual routines on their heads, let us also remember that we have the power to transform the lives of those who are suffering, to turn their days of mourning into days of joy.

Here are a few simple ways that you can give *matanot l'evyonim* (gifts to the poor) on *Purim*:

- Donate food or money to a local food pantry.
- Volunteer at a soup kitchen, cooking or serving a meal.
- Make sandwiches to distribute to the

homeless.

- Bake and sell *hamantaschen* and donate the proceeds to an anti-hunger or social service agency.
- Conduct a canned-food drive for a local food bank.

You can also incorporate social action themes into your *Purim* celebration in the following ways.

Use macaroni graggers

This *Purim*, when the wicked Haman's name is called out during the *megillah* reading, use a box of macaroni and cheese or any other uncooked pasta—as a *gragger* (noisemaker). After the service, donate the boxes of pasta to food banks.

Help Poor Jews Celebrate *Purim*

Create gifts of *Purim* goodies such as *hamantaschen* and bring them to people who would have difficulty buying the items themselves. Children of any age can decorate the boxes or make greeting cards to include. Gift might be brought as part of a visit to a senior center or left anonymously for families in need. Your local Jewish Family Service or rabbi can provide you with a person or place that would love to receive your gift.

Donate Grocery Store Gift Certificates

Gift certificates to local grocery stores can help food pantries assist clients with meeting the dietary needs that canned food drives cannot address, allowing clients in need to purchase fresh foods that food pantries cannot stock.

Have a Party to Feed the Hungry

Are you hosting or attending a *Purim* party or *se'udah* (festive meal)? Make a donation to a food pantry or to another organization that fights hunger

BARBARA & WILLIAM B. THALHIMER, JR. RELIGIOUS SCHOOL



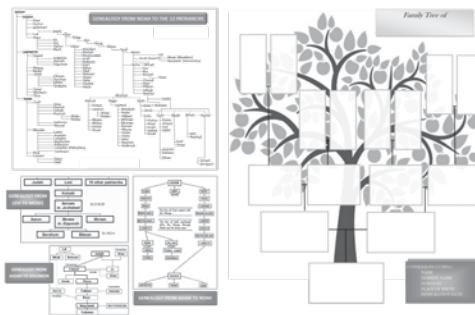
Heather Dinkin
Religious School Administrator

Judaism = A lifetime of Learning

Learning is what Jews do. It never stops. We are the people of the book. Perhaps you remember your *Bubbe* or *Zayde* calling their synagogue a *shul*, the Yiddish word for school. And it is; a place to worship and a place to learn. Jews are commanded when starting a new community to first build a school, and that one does not keep children from school even to build the Temple. Religious education here begins at birth with *Tot Shabbat* and continues until when? *B'nei Mitzvah*? Confirmation? Trick question!! The correct answer is forever.

One may notice in whatever synagogue they attend that the congregation always participates loudly and earnestly in the *V'havta*. It is perhaps the prayer most commonly “known by heart” in Hebrew. In it, we are told to love God with all our heart, soul, and might, and then we are told how to do that, by taking the instructions we are learning and....teaching them to our children diligently, by reciting and living them at home, in public and when we are on our way.

Parents are the first and most important teachers that children have. This is true even for religious education. As the noted Jewish sage, Albert Einstein said, “Example isn’t another way to



The third grade *Gesher* used this *Tanakh* genealogy and personal family tree.

teach, it is the only way to teach.” Our children model the behaviors we show them, what we find important enough to do, they will do. The *Gesher* Program at the religious school is one way our parents model continuing Jewish learning for their children. Parents are taught a lesson by Rabbi Nagel, the students are taught a parallel lesson by their teachers, and then the children join their parents for a joint activity that reinforces the lesson.

So far this year the Kindergarten, First and Second grade parents and student enjoyed “*Tanakh 101*”. Both groups received a lesson on the different parts of the *Tanakh*: The *Torah*, *Nevi'im* (the Prophets), and *Ketuvim* (the Writings). They then came together for an exciting Scavenger Hunt in which they had to answer clues using the knowledge they had just learned about the *Tanakh* to find 11 puzzle pieces hidden all around the CBA campus. When the puzzle was assembled they all received crowns as a reward. In addition to learning about the *Tanakh*, many reported finding parts of the campus they hadn’t known about before.

The Third grade and their parents participated in a gesher lesson on the Heroes of the *Tanakh*. Each heard a 10 minute lesson on all the Heroes of the

Bible from Adam and Eve to Nehemiah and King Ezra, they watched a short video on the same subject and while the parents had a discussion with Rabbi Nagel, the students made a 15 foot long timeline scroll matching the heroes to important events on the timeline, which they very proudly presented to their parents. (It will soon be displayed in the upstairs religious school corridor for everyone to learn from.) The students and parents then together studied a genealogy of the *Tanakh* and had the opportunity to fill out a genealogy of their own family with Hebrew and English names. Some who did not have Hebrew names worked with Rabbi Nagel to choose one. The fun wasn’t over yet, they then made Hebrew name keychains or jewelry using *alef bet* beads.

Upcoming *Geshers* include a lesson on *Tallit* for the Sixth graders and their parents, and Israel for the Fifth grade and Jewish Wedding customs for the Fourth grade.



The Youngs, Heffrons and other kindergarten, first and second grade families received “crowns” as rewards for using their knowledge of *Tanakh* to find all the puzzle pieces on the campus wide scavenger hunt.

Religious School...continued from Page 11

TOT SHABBAT!

Saturdays, February 25 & March 25

**from 9:30 to 11:00 am in the Gumenick Chapel then
Joel House**

For our young congregants who are newborn to 5 years, we have special services designed to give them a fun and warm introduction to the synagogue, to *Shabbat*, to the holidays, and to Judaism. A family friendly Service with music and movement begins at 9:30 am on Saturday mornings. The service is followed with an activity hour fun, snacks and social time

Upcoming Geshers

5th Grade Gesher

Sunday, February 26th

Topic: Israel

4th Grade Gesher

Sunday, March 5th

Topic: Jewish Wedding Customs

**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!

CBA Youth Groups

Beth Ahabah Senior Youth Group

Grade 8 through 12

Beth Ahabah Teens are going to start off February with a ski trip from Friday, February 10th to Saturday, February 11th. We will be joining other youth groups from across Virginia for a ski trip hosted by Temple Beth El in Harrisonburg to Massanutten Mountain and Massanutten Water Park. This event is open to everyone in 8th to 12th grade, so contact Lori Allen to sign up!

On Sunday, February 26th, there will be a *Madrichim* Social before Religious School! We'll meet in the youth lounge fo some breakfast.

On Saturday, March 18th, JeRafty (our teen youth group) will be having a night on the town! We will be going to dinner and doing something fun afterwards! This event will be open to everyone in 8th to 12th grade and Brian will be emailing more details soon!



From Friday, March 24th to Sunday, March 26th will be NFTY-MAR's TheVent! Get to know Jewish teens from Maryland, Virginia, D.C. and North Carolina while competing in a color war-style event! This event is open to all 8th through 12th graders. Look for an email with more details soon!

Beth Ahabah Middle Schoolers

Grade 6 through 8

Later this winter we will be having a board game day! Join your friends after religious school in playing some games and hanging out!

Beth Ahabah Kids

Grade 2 through 5

Stay tuned for details on an After School Activity on March 19th!

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Beth Ahabah Men of Reform Judaism

by David Feibish
President Beth Ahabah Brotherhood/MRJ

Looking back, looking ahead....



December 2016 was an exciting and fun month for Beth Ahabah's Brotherhood.

In addition to volunteer ushering and presenting *B'nei Mitzvah* gifts, and on December 11th preparing and cooking hundreds of *latkes* for the Religious School *Hanukkah* Party, we had our 2nd BREWS & BROTHERHOOD social at Strangeways Brewing.

Besides the big attendance of children and parents at the *Hanukkah* Party, we had new volunteer faces helping Brotherhood. It was an outstanding event, thanks to the leadership of Dan Rosenthal.

We also had familiar and many new faces at our men's social event, which was very rewarding and exciting as well. The Strangeways venue exuded the growing "hipster" reputation of RVA (and Brotherhood?). The craft beer selections unique to Strangeways Brewing were well received and enjoyed by those in attendance. Rabbi Nagel, a craft brew aficionado, joined us. The private room for our event was eclectic and fun, with its location safely near the actual micro-brew

area surrounded with stacked barrels of product. The dinner provided was heartily consumed and there was a lot of interaction between all those in attendance.

I want to thank the Brotherhood Board for giving me the freedom and budget to put together last year's men's-only events at Hardywood, and this year at Strangeways.

Some years ago when I first started participating with Brotherhood, I did it in spite of my thinking it was made up of older men with whom I probably did not have much in common. I could not have been more wrong.

There is a natural churn with the active Brotherhood membership, but it consists of men who run the full range of ages. We have active members with children in Religious School, to members like me with a child who celebrated her Confirmation 17 years ago and others who date well beyond me. The thing we have in common is that we want in some way to volunteer as a contribution to Beth Ahabah.



I am hopeful our social event opened the eyes of younger men in our congregation that Brotherhood offers more than just volunteer work and meetings to budget and plan events. Brotherhood is really a key component of many activities that happen at Beth Ahabah.

Doing for others is very rewarding for all of us in Brotherhood, but I have to admit that I do it for myself as well. The sense of self-satisfaction observing others who enjoy our cookouts; eating our delicious *latkes*; fulfilling a request of providing lunch for 75 volunteers



for a *Tikkun Olam* Committee event; sponsoring an affordable family night in January at a University of Richmond basketball game, a [board & other] Game Night in February for all ages, setting up and participating in the March Purim Carnival at the JCC and more, make it all worthwhile!

This is an open invitation for men of all ages to attend a meeting to simply check out Brotherhood and perhaps offer to volunteer in some small way. You don't have to make an all-consuming commitment; offer what you are comfortable doing and check out what Brotherhood has to offer.

The volunteer efforts we provide to the Congregation as a whole are invaluable, but as men and fathers we also provide leadership and show the way for our sons and daughters how to shape their commitment to Jewish life.

Brotherhood has the following opportunities to participate in February and March 2017:

Game Night
Saturday, February 11 at 7:00 p.m.

JCC Purim Festival
Sunday, March 12 at 10:00 a.m.
Weinstein JCC

Men of Beth Ahabah, look for our meeting notices and other upcoming events posted in the weekly Beth Ahabah enews! As always, you are welcome to call or email me anytime to discuss Brotherhood or about participating/volunteering in any way with one of our events or programs.

Contact David Feibish at 804.399.4514 or oldbenz@aol.com



**Beth Ahabah Women
of Reform Judaism**
by Meg Marshak
President Beth Ahabah Sisterhood/WRJ

As I write this article, I must let you know that being a part of Beth Ahabah Women of Reform Judaism and the congregation as a whole has new meaning for me. As my husband's recent hospital stay turned into a prolonged recovery period, I find myself being supported in ways I could not have imagined. Caring for each other is alive and well at Beth Ahabah. We (John and I) have been well fed and there is a feeling of great support from many people. Even as I sat in the hospital taking in the change in outcome for John's surgery, I felt the support of everyone. And, in fact, the support was there. As soon as the word got out, the offers of food and support, started to come. I felt that anything I may have needed would be there. Beth Ahabah is a great community that cares for each other.

National news includes the Fried Leadership Conference, to be held in Charleston, SC. March 2-5. This conference is for women only and is WRJ's answer to the URJ's Biennial. The Biennial has become very large and it is a problem to find enough meeting rooms for both groups to meet at one time. Therefore, the women have decided to take care of business and train new leaders all at one time. It is a time to learn about the importance of women in the Reform movement, help Reform Judaism grow in strength and find your voice in the future of women in the Reform movement as well as

learn and pray with women from around the country and world.

Now on to the business of BAWRJ—We have something in the works that we hope will allow you to contribute your creative side. As you know, there are 1st Friday Family Dinners that are becoming ever more popular. As we set more tables, we find that we do not have enough *Challah* Covers. Our *Challah* covers are in a state of too few and in not so great shape. To solve the problem, Sisterhood is planning events for any women interested in helping, to create a new set of covers. We will have you come to the Goldburg and engage in this fantastic endeavor. These events will be open to any and all women and their post *B'nai Mitzvah* children. All materials will be provided. All we need are your creative juices and time. WATCH THE WEEKLY BULLETIN FOR TIMES.

If you have any suggestions for activities, Please let me know. We are open to all comers. I can be reached at megemarshak@gmail.com. Watch the Temple e-news for the latest updates and coming events.

**When does
Tu BiShevat
occur?**



Tu BiShevat or the "New Year of the Trees" is Jewish Arbor Day. The holiday is observed on the fifteenth (tu) of *Shevat* which this year coincides with February 11. Scholars believe that *Tu BiShevat* was originally an agricultural festival, marking the emergence of spring. After the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.C.E. this holiday was a way for Jews to symbolically bind themselves to their former homeland by eating foods that could be found in Israel. In the sixteenth and seventeenth century Kabbalists created a ritual for *Tu BiShevat* similar to the Passover seder. Today, *Tu BiShevat* has also become a tree planting festival in Israel, in which both Israelis and Jews around the world plant trees in honor or in memory of a loved one or friend.

Tu BiShevat, also known as *Chamishah Asar BiShevat* (the fifteenth day of the month of *Shevat*) has a long and varied background in Judaism. Today, the most commonly associated theme ascribed to *Tu BiShevat* is the environment. It is considered a festival of nature, full of wonder, joy, acknowledgement and thankfulness for God's creation as we anticipate the renewal of the natural world. Linking these ideas and *tikkun olam*, during this festival we consider our obligation to care for God's world, of which we are the custodians, and our responsibility for sharing the fruits of God's earth with all.

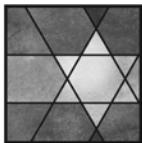
For more information on *Tu BiShevat*, visit URJ.org.

**Volunteer for the CBA
Communications Committee!**

Do you have an interest in marketing, social media, photography or journalism?

We'd love your help!

Contact Ron Kasoff at rkassoff@aol.com or Russ Finer at r.finer@bethahabah.org for more details.



GENERATIONS
BETH AHABAH FOR TODAY & TOMORROW



HELP BUILD OUR FUTURE – JOIN THE LEGACY CIRCLE

Beth Ahabah is pleased to announce the launch of our Legacy Circle for those members who have helped secure our future by making a legacy gift to the temple as part of their estate plan. The Legacy Circle is part of the Life and Legacy program which Beth Ahabah has joined in partnership with the Richmond Jewish Foundation following Richmond's selection to be part of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation's national legacy gift initiative. We have nine new participants who joined the Legacy Circle in the fall. Beth Ahabah will qualify for a substantial incentive grant from the Grinspoon Foundation if we receive at least nine more new legacy gifts by the end of April. 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. Look for upcoming events in the spring to thank those who have joined our Legacy Circle.

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

NEW TECHNOLOGY IS COMING TO BETH AHABAH

We are currently testing a new membership management system and during February/March, will be running parallel systems. The new system will be cloud-based, providing greatest security for our member data, more flexibility for accessing data, and significantly improved efficiencies. While we move from one system to another, there may be the possibility of a mistake in billing. If that happens, please accept our sincere apologies and please contact the office immediately so that we can correct the error. In addition, we will be replacing the antiquated computers in the office, in part, thanks to a generous donation by Brian and Ellen Glass. We are grateful for their support, which will help provide our staff with the critical upgrade needed to work more effectively.

The Sopranos...continued from Page 7

where she and her brother get their musical skills." Her musical skills extend to an improv group "Jester's Link" and a "nerd" rock band "Dimensional Riffs." By day, Kat is working on her PhD in Microbiology at VCU studying periodontal bacteria. She volunteers with the Virginia Biotech Association, her home synagogue Beth Chaverim and the Southeastern FoodBank. Her parents live in VA Beach. Her musical brother is studying Music Technology at VA Tech. Her fiancé, Jake, lives in Richmond and works as a CAD technician.

BETH AHABAH BOOK CLUB

May 4, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.
 at the home of Katy Yoffy
The Midwife of Venice by Roberta Rich
 For more information, contact Katy at
 kyoffy@gmail.com



**Congregation Beth Ahabah proudly presents
Purim Shpiel 2017
“It’s Been a Hamantaschen Days Night”
Saturday, March 11th • 7:00pm • Goldburg Auditorium**



Yes folks, it's almost Purim, and you know what that means, Purim Shpiel time!

Beth Ahabah will proudly draw back the Goldburg Auditorium stage curtain for another amazingly zany and somewhat historical (hysterical may be a better way of putting it) rendition of the Book of Esther. We have put together a cast of characters living in Chopped Liverpool (a.k.a. Shushan).

Come join the fun and relive the story of Purim through the likes of John, Paul, George, Ringo, and a host of other characters you will come to love. And if that isn't enough to get you interested, weave in some familiar songs (with some unfamiliar lyrics) from The Beatles, add some wine, snacks and hamantaschen, and you have the perfect storm.

Mark your calendar now to see our “almost world renowned” cast and crew.

For further information, please contact Ken Roeper at 804.658.1556 or roopers@comcast.net.

CBA LIFE:

On Sunday, December 11, Religious School students celebrated *Hanukkah* with activities and the Brotherhood's *latkes*.



CBA Life..continued from Page 17

Once a month, our littlest members and their parents join the rabbi for a special *Tot Shabbat* service.



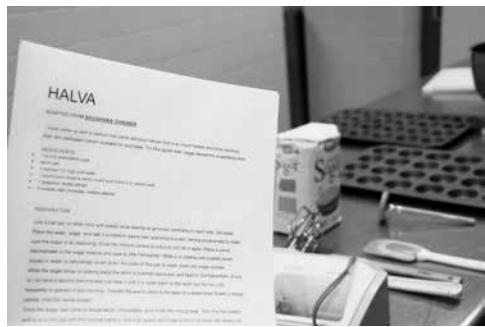
Upcoming Tot Shabbats:

Saturday, February 27
 Saturday, March 25
 at 9:30 am
 in the Gumenick
 Chapel

CBA Life..continues on Page 19

CBA Life...continued from Page 18

Once a week, *Midrasha* students gather to learn about Jewish customs and practices, and how to cook traditional dishes like halva.



Purim...continued from Page 10

for a percentage of the cost of the food. Ask guests to bring donations of money or canned goods to help fulfill their obligation to give gifts to the poor—and to add meaning to your celebration.

Distribute Information about Help for Victims of Domestic Violence

In the Book of Esther, two women find themselves in vulnerable positions because of their gender. Vashti pays a high price for her dignity when she is banished from the palace for refusing to dance at the king's drinking party. Esther, who is chosen as Vashti's successor in a beauty pageant, fears for her very life in approaching the king without his express request to see her. As we celebrate our victory over oppression, may we also remember those, including millions of women, who are not yet free. Place informational material about a local shelter for victims of spousal abuse at your synagogue, workplace, hair salon, and clothing stores—anywhere you can think of.

Give Your Old Cell Phone to Victims of Domestic Violence

As you remember the stories of Vashti and Esther, commit to helping women in similar situations. The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence collects deactivated cell phones, which still allow for 911 calls, to distribute to victims of domestic violence so that they can call for emergency help. Visit their website for more information.

Donate to Women's Empowerment Campaigns

Like Vashti and Esther, women in developing countries and, sometimes even in our own, have limited control over their bodies or their livelihoods. In honor of Purim, choose a campaign or organization that is meaningful to you, and invest your time or money to further the cause. Consider issues such

as reproductive choice, global poverty, human trafficking, and international violence against women.

DID YOU KNOW? Facts, Figures and Folklore of Purim



Did you know that the word Purim is Hebrew for "lots"? The name of the holiday refers to the plot of the king's advisor, Haman, to draw lots for which Jews to kill first. He planned to massacre all the Jews. Esther, one of the king's wives and a Jewess herself, saved the Jewish people from Haman's "lots" plot by revealing it to the king.

Did you know that the only holy Jewish book in which the word for "lots" appears is the Book of Esther, traditionally read on Purim?

Did you know that the Book of Esther retells the story of Purim, when the Jewish people were spared from a death decree by the King of Persia's evil advisor, Haman? The Book of Esther is traditionally written upon a scroll, known as the "Megillat Esther." The megillah is read twice during the holiday—once at night, and once the next morning. Purim, like all Jewish holidays, runs for approximately 25 hours, beginning at sunset.

Did you know that the expression "the whole megillah" comes from the holiday of Purim? On Purim, the story of Esther is read from a scroll known as a megillah. The whole megillah must be

read twice on Purim, once at night and once the following morning.

Did you know that Purim is one of the most joyous holidays in the Jewish religion? So joyous, in fact, that the rabbis have actually commanded adults to get drunk on the holiday of Purim.

Did you know that there is even a Purim custom that calls for getting inebriated? Indeed, Jewish law commands that Purim revelers get so intoxicated that they can't tell the difference between the names of the hero of the Purim story, Mordechai, and its villain, Haman.

Did you know that in addition to being one of the most festive holidays, Purim is also one of the noisiest? That's because every time Haman's name is mentioned during the reading of the megillah, worshippers are instructed to make as much noise as possible to drown out his name. A special instrument was even created for this noise-making, called a gragger (grogger)!

Did you know the Jewish people have a custom of giving alms to the poor on Purim? The specific proscription is to give three half-dollar coins, symbolizing that the giver is part of the larger whole. Everyone, rich and poor alike, is required to give the same amount on Purim, since everyone has an equal role in the destiny of the Jewish people.

Did you know that Jewish people also have a custom to give friends and family members food baskets specially prepared with at least two different types of ready-to-eat foods? The rationale behind this custom is likely linked to another tradition—having a feast in the late afternoon. The baskets ensure that everyone has enough food to eat at the Purim feast.

Purim...continues on Page 21

Purim...continued from Page 20

Did you know that hamantashen are a three cornered pastry filled with poppy seeds or fruit that are served on Purim?

The cookies are named for the three-cornered hat that Haman wore. In Hebrew, hamantashen are called *oznei haman* or Haman's ears.



Did you know that on Purim, children dress up in costume for Purim parades and carnivals? Traditionally children dress up as Queen Esther or Mordechai. Of course modern day revelers also dress up as Disney princesses and super heroes.

Did you know that Purim is celebrated during a Jewish leap month? The holiday falls on the 14th of the month of *Adar*. When there is a leap year, there are two *Adars* (*Adar I* and *Adar II*). *Purim* is celebrated in *Adar II* during a leap year.

Did you know that in walled cities, like the Persian city in which the story of Purim first took place, Purim is celebrated a day later, on the 15th of Adar? Today, the only recognized walled cities celebrating the later *Purim* date are Jerusalem, Hebron and the old city of *Tzfat* in northern Israel.

Did you know that the holiday of Purim begins on the 13th of Adar (regardless of whether you live in a walled city) with the Fast of Esther? In

Hebrew, this fast is known as *Ta'anit Esther*. The day-long fast commemorates Esther's three-day fast before she revealed her true identity to the king and pleaded for her people's safety.

Did you know that the Book of Esther is the only holy Jewish book that does not ever mention God's name?

Did you know that Purim is one of the only Jewish holidays not commanded in the Torah? The holiday can trace its roots to the Talmudic period. The earliest known celebration of *Purim* was in the 2nd century CE.

<http://www.holidays.net/purim/didyouknow.htm>



MAKE A DONATION IN MEMORY OF A LOVED ONE

Send in a check, call the office (804.358.6757) or make your contribution online at bethahabah.org.

One can give upon a death or upon the anniversary of the death. *Yahrzeit* is a Yiddish word that means "anniversary," and is used specifically to refer to the day on which a person passed away.

Share Your Favorite Recipes With Us!



Do you have your Bubbie's or Mother's special holiday or Shabbat recipes? (Charoset, Matzoh Ball Soup, Brisket, Kugel, etc.)

We'd love to share them on the Temple blog and in B'Yachad. Please submit them to Lori Allen at l.allen@bethahabah.org

Have You Connected Yet?

BethAhabahConnect is a great way to network with other members of the Beth Ahabah community!

Create and share discussions, events, photo albums and groups that matter to you.

Meet people with similar interests or backgrounds within Beth Ahabah.

Your privacy is secure. Available only for members of Beth Ahabah

Sign up today! visit

bethahabahconnect.twolikeyou.com

ARTICLES FOR THE MAY/JUNE ISSUE OF B'YACHAD ARE DUE BY FRIDAY, MARCH 24!

Contact Susan Morgan at susan@susanwmorganpr.com

DONATIONS**TEMPLE FUND****IN HONOR OF:****Susan Meyers receiving the 2017****Woman of Valor Award***Katy & Jimmy Yoffy***Rabbi Nagel***Frona & Alan Colker***Rabbis Scott & Randi Nagel***Katy & Jimmy Yoffy***Judith Koziol's special birthday***Katy & Jimmy Yoffy***Nettie Opper's special birthday***Katy & Jimmy Yoffy***IN CELEBRATION OF:****The birth of William Kevin Reed,
grandson of Deborah Greenberg***Katie & Ken Roeper***CONGRATULATIONS TO:****Jeanne & Mike Decker in
celebration of their daughter,
Katie Decker's marriage***Katie & Ken Roeper***IN MEMORY OF:****Fannie Rosenthal***Nancy Belleman***Edward Meyer***Nancy Meyer***Mae S. Goldman***Stanley A. Goldman, MD***Pamela S. Finer***Russell M. Finer***Mark Katz***Lee Katz***Jane Miller, our mother***Katie & Ken Roeper***Elbert Richard Sampsell, father of****Pam & David Feibish***Katie & Ken Roeper***Ruby Cansino, my dear mother***Minnie C. Held*

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.

Marc Arenstein*Carole Weintraub***Celia W. Zell***Morton & Myrna Norman**Michael & Pam Zell***Minnie Hirsch & Anne Zeichner***Terry & Jerry Hirsch***Saul Danburg***Elizabeth & Elliot Danburg***Allen Norman***Pam & Sandy Norman***Harry Yaffe***Russell Finer***Tessie Katz***Gloria Starkman***Kate Levine***Linda Pinsky***Marshall Lowenstein***Marilyn Lowenstein & Family***Jack J. Frank***Anthony J. Frank***Shirley Arenstein, my mother***Dianne A. Master***Jayne G. Gross***Pam & Sandy Norman***Leon Goldstein***Esther Goldstein Kelly***Norman Schein***Mark Schein***Gladys Rozovsky***Fay Rozovsky***Eric Blumenthal***Lynn B. Stevenson***Rose Sukonick***Ellyn & Steve Sukonick***Frances Komins, mother-in-law***Allen Finer***Herman "Hy" Finer, brother***Allen Finer***Dorothy Holzbach, mother-in-law of****Beryl Holzbach***Katie & Ken Roeper***Rick Morgan, husband of Susan****Morgan***Katie & Ken Roeper***Clara Litvin***Stuart Litvin***Ralph G. Phipps***Pamela & Michael Zell***Dr. Robert P. Goodman***Denise Goodman Keil***Herman Morgan***Norman Morgan***Jack J. Frank***Anthony J. Frank***Shirley Arenstein, my mother***Dianne A. Master***Irving Greenberg***Ellen & Brian Glass***Jacob Grossman***Judith & Isaac Koziol***Morris Zeichner***Terry & Jerry Hirsch***Louis Weiner, father-in-law***Russell Finer***Shirley Finn Ableman***Jessica Carty***Miriam Paster***Lonnie & Diane Paster***Paul Corbett***Ira & Maureen Goldstein***Samuel Goldstein***Ira & Maureen Goldstein***THE RABBIS****PHILANTHROPIC FUND****Morton Thalhimer, Jr.****IN HONOR OF:****Rabbi Nagel being installed as the****Senior Rabbi of Beth Ahabah***Cantor Renata Braun & David Braun**Adrienne & Tom Shutt**Rebecca & Rabbi Aaron Starr**Katie & Ken Roeper**Rose & Sheldon Herold***Jane Heffron's Bat Mitzvah***Allison & Peter Heyman***Sam Feder's Bar Mitzvah***Stefanie & Ofer Feder***John Marshak's speedy recovery***Ken & Katie Roeper***Elise Scherr's speedy recovery***Ken & Katie Roeper***Donations...continues on Page 23**

Donations...continued from Page 22

Nettie Opper's special birthday

Rachel & Jim Schmidt

IN APPRECIATION OF:

**Earl Ferguson & Richard Birnbaum,
for your generosity & kindness shown**

Rabbi Scott Nagel

IN CELEBRATION OF:

**The birth of Judah Elon Bourne, son
of Coffee & Adam Bourne**

Ken & Katie Roeper

The birth of Rose Antoinette

Thalhimer, granddaughter of

Marcia & Harry Thalhimer

Ken & Katie Roeper

**The birth of William Kevin Reed,
grandson of Deborah Greenberg**

Ken & Katie Roeper

**The birth of Hunter Colin Benjamin,
grandson of Ron & Bonnie Kasoff**

Ken & Katie Roeper

IN MEMORY OF:

Ruth B. Lee & Michael E. Boustanty

Helene & Richard Lee

Ida Wagner, mother of Patricia

Dodson

Janice & Robert Freed

Ken & Katie Roeper

Mabel May Hull, mother of Rita

Buxbaum

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CANTOR GOLDMAN

MUSIC FUND

IN MEMORY OF:

Valerii Kondrashin

Natan & Valeria Berenshteyn

Hannah Berenshteyn

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HEBREW CEMETERY FUND

IN MEMORY OF:

Leonard Ecker

Steven Ecker

Harry Grandis

Betty Sue & Todd LePage

Mary Elizabeth LePage

Betty Sue & Todd LePage

Henry Gunst, Jr.

Katy & Jimmy Yoffy

GENERATONS FUND

IN HONOR OF:

Rachel Ann Bassell

Sharon & Don Bassell

BETH AHABAH CARES FUND

IN MEMORY OF:

Shirley Lopater, my mother

Lori Skiles

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL TUITION

ASSISTANCE FUND

IN HONOR OF:

The Bat Mitzvah of Rena & Bert

Berlin's granddaughter, Rose Field

Barbara J. Goldberg

ELAINE L. SCHEIN

**RELIGIOUS SCHOOL EDUCATION
SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

IN HONOR OF:

Monica Rosenthal receiving the Girl

Scout Gold Award

Katie & Ken Roeper

TIKKUN OLAM FUND

IN HONOR OF:

Susan Meyers, 2017 Woman of Valor

Karen & Dan Hough

Beth Rosenthal

Melissa & Andy Brownstein

LEWIS I. HELD

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

IN MEMORY OF:

Lucille Meyer, Rose Binder, Milton

Meyer, Jr., Milton Meyer, Sr. &

Mildred Meyer

Bruce Meyer

MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

IN HONOR OF:

**Our son, Mark Opper, Becoming a
Partner at Deloitte**

Roberta & Peter Opper

Elise Scherr's Speedy Recovery

Cynthia Becker

Denise Keil's Speedy Recovery

Cynthia Becker

IN MEMORY OF:

Rick Morgan

Shelly Berger & Matt Richmond

Marc Arenstein

Ted & Marianne P. Metzger

Janet Silverstein

Bonnie & Mike Eisenman

Henry Gunst, Jr.

Mrs. Blanche B. Nusbaum

**Shirley Perel Plotkin, Our Beloved
Mother**

Ted & Marianne P. Metzger

**Ronald M. Plotkin, My Beloved
Brother**

Ted & Marianne P. Metzger

IN APPRECIATION:

Temple Beth El of Williamsburg, VA

Hebrew Cemetery

of Congregations Beth Shalom
& Beth Ahabah



It's never too early to be prepared.

**For more information please call Russell
Finer or Bill Thalhimer, III at 358.6757.**

CBA *Shabbat & Holiday Service Schedule February/March 2017*

Friday, February 3First 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, February 5

Religious School

9:15 AM

Monday, February 6*Midrasha Monday*

6:00 PM

Friday, February 10*Jewish Music Shabbat Service*

7:30 PM

Sunday, February 12

Religious School

9:15 AM

Monday, February 13*Midrasha Monday*

6:00 PM

Friday, February 17*Shabbat Service*

7:30 PM

Friday, February 24*Shabbat Service w/Choir*

7:30 PM

Saturday, February 25*Tot Shabbat*

9:30 AM

Bar Mitzvah of Nathan Aschheim

10:30 AM

Sunday, February 26

Religious School

9:15 AM

Monday, February 27*Midrasha Monday*

6:00 PM

Friday, March 3First 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, March 5

Religious School

9:15 AM

Monday, March 6*Midrasha Monday*

6:00 PM

Friday, March 10*Purim Themed Shabbat Service*

7:30 PM

Saturday, March 11*Bar Mitzvah of Jake Weiss*

10:30 AM

Purim Shpiel

7:00 PM

Sunday, March 12

Religious School

9:15 AM

Monday, March 13*Midrasha Monday*

6:00 PM

Friday, March 17*Shabbat Service*

7:30 PM

Saturday, March 18*Bar Mitzvah of Mannix Green*

10:30 AM

Sunday, March 19

Religious School

9:15 AM

Monday, March 20*Midrasha Monday*

6:00 PM

Friday, March 24*Shabbat Service w/Adult Choir*

7:30 PM

Saturday, March 25*Tot Shabbat*

9:30 AM

Bat Mitzvah of Nicole Brager

10:30 AM

Sunday, March 26

Religious School

9:15 AM

Monday, March 27*Midrasha Monday*

6:00 PM

Friday, March 31*Shabbat Service*

7:30 PM

CALENDAR INFORMATION IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE, please check the calendar online at bethahabah.org

BETH AHABAH MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

A Brief History of Reform Jewish Music (and why Beth Ahabah is so fortunate)

by David Farris, Director



David Farris, Director

At our Museum & Archives, our main focus is Beth Ahabah and its rich history. We are especially blessed in the area of music, and this month I would like to talk about how we came to be where we are.

The only remnant of ancient Jewish music that can be heard today is the *shofar*. The next oldest element of Jewish music is the of singing the *Torah* and *Haftarah*—so-called cantillation. While the method of cantillation is several millennia old, the oldest surviving examples of how cantillation actually sounded dates from the 16th century when some non-Jewish Germans wrote it down. Until that time and for most Jewish music until the 19th or even 20th century, Jewish music was handed down from generation to generation by oral tradition. Obviously, after three thousand years and dispersion all over the globe, the music of the Jews is no longer a unified, common tradition.

In the 19th century a great deal of traditional Ashkenazi music was written down, and one of the leaders in this effort was a man named Solomon Sulzer in Vienna, who published cantors' music and also choral and organ arrangements. This music, it is believed,

served as the basis for American Reform music.

Most frontier Jewish communities (like Beth Sholome, our ancestor congregation) started synagogues without any cantor or trained Jewish musician, so there were many non-Jews who directed the music of our leading Reform congregations. Such a man was Christian Frederick Kitziger, organist and choir director of Touro Synagogue in New Orleans during the last two decades of the 19th century. He composed more synagogue music in America during the 19th century than anyone else, and his music was sung in congregations in many states and foreign countries.

In the second half of the 20th century, Hasidic nigunim were introduced. These wordless tunes probably owe a great deal to non-Jewish Russian folk music, but they became so popular that today they are considered by many to be an essential element of Jewish music. In my time at Beth Ahabah, they have always been heard.

In the 1930's, inspired by Ernst Bloch's "Sacred Service", serious composers began writing music for Reform services - people like Arnold Schoenberg, Kurt Weill, and Darius Milhaud. In this period many Reform rabbis wrote music for their synagogues, combining traditional Jewish elements with contemporary harmonies.

In the 1960's, under the growing influence of Israeli folk music and American protest songs (such as the songs of Bob Dylan), a new style of music was introduced into Reform synagogues to attract young people looking for relevance in their religion. This new music has retained its popularity and,

presented in combination with the older music, thrives today.

At Beth Ahabah, in the present day, we are blessed with creative musicians who perform and lead our music. They are products of old and new influences, both American and Eastern European, and continually delight our ears and souls with their artistry.

I once heard a prominent composer say in an interview that he never composes at the piano, as his fingers tend to wander into familiar keys and chord progressions, which would give his music a "sameness" that he wanted to avoid. I suspect that Natan, our Music Director, does much the same as his wonderful arrangements continually surprise us with their rich, modern harmonies, and creative rhythms.

Sarah, our wonderful Cantorial Soloist (soon to be an ordained Cantor), has been trained in the liturgy from childhood by her rabbi father. Her Hebrew pronunciation, according to an Israeli friend, is flawless. Her intonation is perfect, and her voice is strong and inspiring. Great things await her, and personally I hope that Beth Ahabah will be her home for years to come.

Our wonderful choir, a mix of professional and amateur singers, continues to amaze us with their artistry. Natan plays the choir like the beautiful instrument it is, and Sarah joins in to provide her inimitable touch.

The old pipe organ no longer plays a part in our worship, having been replaced by the piano. If we were to spend the \$700,000-plus it would cost to restore it, we would still have a 1904 organ and, as with most things, organ

A Brief History of Reform Jewish Music...continued from Page 25

builders have learned a lot in the past 113 years. Restoring it, then, is not a sensible option. We will, however, continue to appreciate the imposing appearance of those gold pipes over the Ark. One of these days, ask us to show you what is behind them.

So, we move into the new year with a new spirit and beautiful music. Those are the ingredients that make for success and contentment. From that strong foundation, we move forward and grow.

Visit us at the Beth Ahabah Museum & Archives any day (except Friday and Saturday) between 10 and 3. Bonnie, Amy and I look forward to greeting you.

Time to Advertise?



If you feel your business needs a little more attention, please give Russ Finer a call at 804.358.6757, ext. 302

TREASURES FROM THE MUSEUM & ARCHIVES COLLECTION



Sterling Silver Snuff Box, c. 1835

Many items within our holdings are treasures simply because they are not common items in today's current households. They have been given to us to preserve and protect for future generations. Some are very fragile and not frequently handled or displayed while others will maintain a fairly consistent state as long as we keep them safely stored. The pictured snuff box is one of the latter type.

Snuff boxes were designed to hold a day's supply of snuff (pulverized tobacco) and keep it from drying out. They were often ornate in design and made to be carried in one's pocket throughout the day. This snuff box

belonged to Beth Ahabah's first Rabbi, Maximilian J. Michelbacher. Reverend Michelbacher served the congregation from 1846 to 1879. The snuff box was engraved and given to him by his student, Gustavus Millhiser, in 1863. The box is made of coin silver and probably dates to around 1835.

The snuff box is about 3 ¼ by 2 ¼ inches in size. It was given to the Archives by Rosalie M. Cohen in 1974 in memory of Sam Cohen.

A Gem from the Archives



Rev. Maximilian J. Michelbacher,
Beth Ahabah's first rabbi.

This portrait of Rev. Michelbacher by Ferdinand Spangenberg was painted in 1859. It was donated to the Archives by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Klein and is currently on display in the Museum. Visitors often ask what Rev. Michelbacher is holding in his closed hand. While the portrait predates his receipt of the snuff box from Gustavus Millhiser, it still could be that the Rabbi was painted holding another treasured snuff box in his hand.

BETH AHABAH MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

1109 W. Franklin Street
804.353.2668 | bama@bethahabah.org

Currently on Exhibit in the Galleries:

- ***The Other Side of the Curtain:***

Soviet Jews Create New Lives in Richmond, Virginia

- ***That You'll Remember Me:***

Jewish Voices of the Civil War

- ***Commonwealth & Community:***

Jewish Virginia 1585 to the Present

Museum Hours:

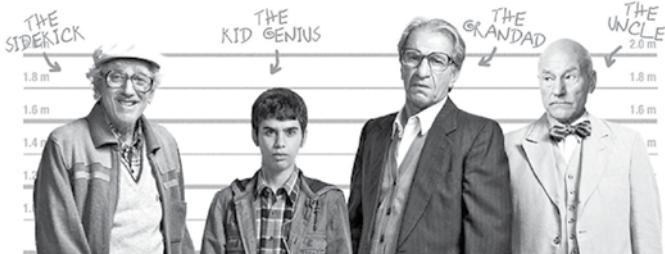
10 am to 3 pm Sunday - Thursday

The Museum & Archives is located next door to the Temple office on Franklin Street.

Please call in advance to make an appointment to work in the Archives, for group tours; if you have visitors who require special treatment; or if you need to visit outside of our usual working hours. We will do our best to accommodate you.

Beth Ahabah Loves Movies

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First Fridays

Something for Everyone!

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Come as
 you are!

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 -
 March 3rd • April 7th • May 5th

Successor to K.K. Beth Shalom... 1789

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Richmond, Virginia 23220

1111 W. Franklin Street



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Religious School students in kindergarten, first and second grades and their families went on a scavenger hunt to find the pieces of a puzzle that assemble to create this image that reinforced their Gesher lesson on Tanakh. Read the entire article on page 11.