



# CONGREGATION BETH AHABAH B'YACHAD

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## THINK CAMP FOR THE SUMMER!



Rabbi Scott Nagel  
Sophia and Nathan Gumenick Senior Rabbi

Every summer I engage in some Jewish regression to youth, I spend two weeks at Camp Harlam, our regional Union for Reform Judaism camp, where this year hundreds of Jewish kids will spend the summer swimming, playing gaga, having song sessions after lunch, Israeli dance late into the night, wearing white on *Shabbat* and acting out the weekly *Torah* portion in skits and conversations that can only

happen in a sanctuary made of trees with windows open to the sky.

If you can't tell, I love camp. I am a rabbi because of my Jewish summer camp experiences as a teenager. Just look at a Jewish summer camper, they are tan, they are filled with energy, most days they are covered in paint or dirt, or both, and most of all they are experiencing Judaism in a way that is making a lasting and profound impact on their lives—they are experiencing it through a joy-filled community of peers.

So what's the secret, what is it about camp that is so helpful and inspiring for the Jewish experience? What can we learn from these kids that can teach us as adult

Think Camp!...Continues on Page 4

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## TIKKUN OLAM

by Tony Wharton

Tikkun Olam Committee

Members of the *Tikkun Olam* Committee recently toured the men's shelter and family shelter in downtown Richmond run by HomeAgain, the Richmond nonprofit focused on helping those experiencing homelessness secure and maintain a home.



*Tikkun Olam* has chosen HomeAgain as an organization where the congregation can really make an impact on a problem. Several *Mitzvah* Day activities were directed toward gathering supplies for HomeAgain clients and helping with the transition back into permanent housing. Over the past year, HomeAgain has assisted

721 individuals across 567 households.

One ongoing project is a Habitat for Humanity house being built for a HomeAgain client, Stephanie, a partially blind single mother of twins. CBA members can help Stephanie with the sweat equity required for every recipient of a Habitat for Humanity house. Stephanie is employed (20 years same company), but due to her eye issues she lost her home. To see more about Stephanie go to [homeagainrichmond.org](http://homeagainrichmond.org) and scan down to the section Client Selected to Receive Habitat Home, Needs Help.

During the tour of HomeAgain's shelters, committee members were impressed by how professionally and humanely the facilities are run. They toured the facilities with Executive Director Lorae Ponder and HomeAgain board member and CBA member Jim Schmidt.

Jim Schmidt and several committee members also recently attended HomeAgain's annual dinner, where its volunteers and staff were recognized for their support.



*Thank you!*

*March 27, 2017*

*Dear Congregation Beth Ahabah,*

*Thank you so much for making an investment in the future of our community with your recent gift of 140 lbs. of food to FeedMore.*

*For too many neighbors in our region, the need to choose between buying medicine, paying rent or mortgage, or putting food on the table is a predicament we see all too often. These tough financial choices ultimately result in skipped meals for adults and seniors, and nutritionally deficient meals and snacks for children. Thankfully, your compassionate support and FeedMore's comprehensive hunger-relief programs help prevent the harmful consequences of hunger. In supporting the Central Virginia Food Bank, the Community Kitchen, and Meals on Wheels, you are helping us to better prepare children for learning, strengthen families, and enhance the quality of life for our elderly and disabled neighbors.*

*Again, on behalf of all those whose lives will be empowered and whose future you are brightening with your generosity, we thank you.*

*Gratefully yours,  
Chisty Dalton  
Community Events Manager*



# A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:



Russell M. Finer, FSA  
Executive Director

At our soon to be held Annual Meeting you will be hearing about the programmatic, religious and financial state of Beth Ahabah., so I have decided to introduce you to another side of our temple.

I would like to write a bit about a very influential family in our congregation. They are the Tate family, a large and vigorous clan who appear on the membership rolls of synagogues and other Jewish and secular organizations all over the country and throughout the world.

How many of them do you know?

Well, there is the patriarch, Dic Tate who wants to run everything in the temple, while his brother, Ro Tate wants to change everything. Their sis-

ter, Agi Tate, stirs up plenty of trouble with her husband, Irri Tate.

Whenever any new projects are suggested, Hesi Tate and his wife Vege Tate, want to wait until next year to deal with it. Then there is their aunt, Imi Tate who wants our congregation to look like every other temple. When we try to plan our future, Devas Tate provides a voice of doom while his cousin, Poten Tate, only wants to be a big shot.

But not all members of the Tate family are negative. Brother Facili Tate is always helpful in getting things done, whether or not he originally agreed with the idea. And a delightful, happy cousin, Felici Tate spreads around good cheer. Always carefully thinking things through are cousins Cogi Tate and Medi Tate, who lend a steadying hand.

Then, of course, there is the black sheep of the family: like the wicked child of the Seder, Ampu Tate has cut himself off from the rest of the family and from the community as well! To which member of the Tate family are you related?

It is usually said that you can pick your friends, but not your relatives. However, this is the one exception to that par-

ticular rule. This is the one case where you can pick the family members with whom you want to be related.

Please think it over and choose wisely!

Dear Congregants:

We are near the end of our congregations' fiscal year, May 31 and are now appealing to you for timely payment of your financial commitment. Please take a close look at your latest Congregation Beth Ahabah statement. Hopefully, when you remit payment your balance will be paid in full or arrangements will have been made.

Please pay your balance with a check or provide us with credit card information as detailed below.

If special circumstances have arisen during this past year, please contact me at the synagogue to discuss payment terms.

Thank you for your support of our congregation.

Sincerely,  
*Russell M. Finer, FSA*  
Executive Director



Mail to:  
1111 West Franklin Street  
Richmond, VA 23220

MasterCard

AMEX

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Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

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3 Digit Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Account Charge Date: \_\_\_\_\_

how better to appreciate the gift of our Jewish identity?

There are so many answers to this question. I want to highlight just three lessons from camp:

1. *Shabbat* is a different time, it's special time. At camp on *Shabbat* the food is better, we clean ourselves up, we dress in white, we sit with our friends (old and new), we take our time at the meal, we sing songs and dance afterwards. We sleep in on Saturday morning. We connect with nature. There is no mail. We have a long period of time to relax or take advantage of the things we didn't get to do during the week, and we end *Shabbat* with a ritual that truly marks the time as different from the week that lies ahead—*Havdalah*. At camp we make time for *Shabbat*, we tell the world it has to wait, this time, children come first.

2. Prayer at camp is a collaborative experience; it doesn't exist unless you help create it. As a rabbi at camp on *Shabbat* I tell a story, some kid or kids with a guitar plays music but the children own the service, they choose the prayers, the melodies, the readings, the setting. At camp we fulfil our children's need to help create prayer, to the shape the experience, to own it. In Judaism it takes a community to truly pray, at camp, our children not only contribute their voices, but their yearnings and our desires. Campers tell us what they need from prayer and we work together to make it happen.

3. Camp runs on Jewish time. And no, I don't mean everything is 15 minutes late. What I mean is that you don't have to go to a certain place to feel Jewish. Judaism is in the air, it's in the food, it's in the names of buildings, the types of activities. Judaism is a consistent thread that runs throughout your day, from blessings in the morning and over meals, to the art projects and stories shared around the campfire. At camp we don't treat Jewish faith and practice as something kept under glass, break only in case of emergency or family crisis or life cycle event. Judaism is used every hour of every day at camp.

There is much more that camp can teach us about the joys of Judaism, but let's start there, with purposeful *Shabbat*, with collaborative prayer and with an embrace of Jewish ritual every day, not just now and then. Camp is living, breathing, sleeping, eating, playing, showering and even breaking the rules Jewishly. There is not a single better thing we can do for our children to foster a positive Jewish identity then to send

them to Jewish summer camp—that is why camp works. Camp is a living Jewish laboratory, where we try new things, establish new curriculum, and learn new songs. Camp teaches us new ways each summer to bring Judaism alive. Camp helps us make Judaism relevant, and keeps our practice relevant, modern and fresh. Camp is where the Joy of Judaism is born. It is why Randi and I spend time all year thinking about and working for our Union For Reform Judaism Camps—it is why we take two weeks of our summer to work at and for camp.



I have the privilege of serving as one of the Deans of Faculty for Camp Harlam. There is no better opportunity to learn and grow than at camp. I am pleased to announce that this summer Congregation Beth Ahabah has the largest contingent of URJ campers in years. I am overwhelmed with excitement with the possibilities that we can bring to our religious school and congregation. We will learn and grow with them as they return and share their excitement and energy for Judaism with us all.

You are never too old, and it is never too late to start thinking about a Union For Reform Judaism Camp. There are URJ camps that specialize in sports, science, technology, and art. What ever camp experience you want, you can find it in our Jewish camping system. We are blessed that the congregation and the Union For Reform Judaism have scholarships available for camp, especially for first time campers. I know every child could benefit from camp, and I know that every Jewish child can strengthen his or her Jewish identity and connection through camp. Please let me know if you are interested in a URJ camp. We can work together to make camp and the Jewish future it will provide for your family and our congregation a reality.

Now is the time to THINK CAMP!

*Latid*, (for the future)

Rabbi Scott Nagel

*Editor's Note: To learn more about URJ camping opportunities visit <https://urjyouth.org/camps/>*

## INSPIRING JEWISH LIVES – BUILDING SACRED COMMUNITY

By Katie Roeper, Congregational President

Two years ago, I was installed as Beth Ahabah President and it has been my great honor to serve our congregation in this role, every day since then. We have accomplished so much and experienced significant transformation. The operative word being “we.”

We are not the same congregation we were two years ago, but that is not because of me, it is because of all of us together...caring members of our community who give time, talent and treasure to build our future...my predecessors, who laid the groundwork for many of the changes that have taken place during my administration...18 gifted Board members dedicated to serving our congregation...a stellar staff who go the extra mile to meet our needs...two amazing rabbis, who I have had the privilege to work with, both of whom believe in our congregational vision and have provided wisdom and inspiration to move us forward on our path.

While my term will end in May, the transformation will continue. As promised, we will have an Innovation Plan to serve as a roadmap, thanks again to you. Our Innovation Teams and many individual congregants have provided incredibly thoughtful feedback and have invested hours discussing ideas about how we can move closer to our vision of *Inspiring Jewish Lives and Building Sacred Community*. Our clergy, staff, and lay leadership have considered all of these ideas, evaluating feasibility related to capacity and cost. As a result, ideas have been prioritized, so we can take a staged approach with strategies and action steps. Nothing is in stone. This will be a living, breathing document, allowing for flexibility

and evaluation along the way. The most important thing is that it has been generated by a wide variety of congregants, touching every demographic, which means, there is something for everyone!

While the Innovation Plan is open for any congregant to review, it is lengthy. Therefore we are creating an Innovation Brief, for those who prefer to avoid the weeds. Either way, it will be available beginning May 12th, at the Annual Meeting and after.

Now for a few words about the upcoming activities on May 12th. This will not be like any annual meeting we've held before. In fact, I hesitate to even call it a meeting, except we will handle some important business, including voting on a new slate of officers and Board Members. We have an exceptional group of new managers joining the Board, thanks to Chuck Rothenberg, chair, and the Leadership Development Committee, for their thoughtful work over the past two years.

Please join us Friday, May 12th as we share all we have accomplished together and all that is planned for the coming year.

Thank you for your tremendous support during my term as President! I look forward to continuing to serve our congregation, with a focus on Leadership Development and Congregational Giving. *Mazel tov* to Larry Salzman, Charley Scher, and Julie Mullian. The future of Beth Ahabah is in very good hands!

### Don't Miss the Congregational Celebration and Annual Meeting on Friday, May 12th

**Wine and Cheese Social** with Update on the Capital Project in the Joel House from 5:00 to 6:00 pm

Enjoy a glass of wine and nosh, while learning about details of the upcoming renovations. A brief formal presentation will provide updates on the Capital Project followed by informal conversations with Campaign Chairs, members of the Architectural Review Committee and Officers. This is a great opportunity to receive up-to-the-minute details and ask questions about structural plans for our campus.

**Congregational Dinner and Annual Meeting** in the Goldberg Auditorium from 6:00 to 7:30 pm

Don't want to give too much away but you're going to love this inspirational presentation of past, present, and future. It will stimulate your senses while dinner is satisfying your pallet. A must see!

Call the Temple for reservations: 804-358-6757

**“Sacred Passages” Shabbat Service, Installation, and Celebratory Oneg** at 7:30 pm

Join us for a very special *Shabbat* service, honoring Temple leadership, as we pass the *Torah* from strength to strength, with special blessings by the rabbi. Enjoy an enhanced *oneg* with champagne and delicious desserts. What better time to welcome incoming Board Members and thank retiring lay leadership!



MAY 12!

Dear Congregants:

At the request of Katie Roeper, President of Congregation Beth Ahabah, the Leadership Development Committee has met and developed a slate of nominees for our Officers, Board of Managers and Trustees for the 2017-18 year. We are pleased to submit these names to you for consideration at our Annual Meeting on Friday, May 12, 2017.

For a 1 year term ending in 2018:

President: Larry Salzman

First Vice President: Charley Scher

Second Vice President: Julie Mullian

Treasurer: Lee Katz

For a 2 year term ending in 2019:

Board of Managers:

Deborah Greenberg (2nd term)

Heather LaMont (1st term)

Martin Miller (1st term)

Dena Neuwirth (1st term)

Dan Rosenthal (2nd term)

Cullen Seltzer (2nd term)

Jessica Troutman (1st term)

For a 4 year term ending in 2021:

Trustee: Earl Ferguson

As our bylaws state, nominations for the various officers and Board of Managers may also be made by written petition of at least 75 members in good standing, accompanied by a written statement from the candidate so nominated of his or her willingness to serve in that position. Petitions must be received at the Temple office thirty days prior to the Annual Meeting.

I would like to thank Lisa Kaplan, Martin Miller, Cullen Seltzer, Adam Strauchler, Charley Scher and Dan Neuwirth for serving on the Leadership Development Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Chuck Rothenberg, Chairman

2015-2016 Leadership Development Committee

crothenberg@hf-law.com



*They stood with the Torah as  
a Bar or Bat Mitzvah,  
each accepting individually  
the responsibilities of being a Jewish adult.  
Now, they stand together with the Torah,  
as the Confirmation Class of 2017,  
confirming their commitment  
to Jewish community.*

*Celebrate with our 10th grade students  
as they confirm their commitment to Jewish life:*

*All are invited to attend the  
2017 Confirmation Service  
Friday, May 19 at 7:30 pm*

*Samuel Alburger*

*Shane Bishop*

*Samuel Buxbaum*

*Elizabeth Cheeley*

*Conner Clark*

*Bryce Goldstein*

*Adrian Hammack*

*Jesslyn Katz*

*Hannah Levy*

*Brandon Ranly*

*Hopper Strauchler*

*Liam Struminger*

*John Troutman*

*Jenna Woodburn*

*Alec Wren*

*Please join us as our Community  
celebrates Shabbat and wish each of  
our Confirmands a Mazal Tov!*

## CBA MUSIC MAKERS

by Laura Savage, CBA Music Committee Chair



Basses: First row (L to R) Ken Roeper, Bert Berlin, Jamie Barret; Second Row (L to R) Ricky Williams, Alan Corbett, Brandon Farbstein

### Tenors and Bases, Oh My...

In our final series of getting to know the Adult Choir, we introduce the men of the choir. Our men's choir especially enhances the service for Brotherhood *Shabbat*. But these "low" voices, provide the foundation to many of our songs.

**Bert Berlin** is a long-standing choir member. In addition to choir you have seen Bert perform as Haman, Mordecai and even the King in many *Purim Shpiels*. His wife, Rena, is a docent at the Virginia Holocaust Museum. He is a proud grandfather as well.

**Alan Corbett** has been in the choir for 23 years. He has also had the honor of being the cantorial soloist during summer *Shabbats*. Alan is retired but stays active with the Osher Lifelong Learning Center and reading with the Virginia Voice. He is now enjoying more time with his wife Sandy, as she recently retired. They are active in Brotherhood and Sisterhood, having served in many volunteer roles.

**Michael Kotrady's** rich tenor voice has filled the sanctuary for over 30 years. He is part of the "pros" who provide the amazing sounds during the High Holidays. Michael is married to Lynn, our professional alto. Together, they truly make beautiful music. He also sings at St Steven's Episcopal Church. Michael is a beer and wine distributor in his day job.

**Genvieve Dickerson** is our lady tenor, with a beautiful tone all her own. She has had the honor of lending her voice to enhance services as she chants *Torah*. Her husband is an ardent supporter and can be found in the front row enjoying her contributions. In her spare time, Genvieve loves to travel.

**Brandon Farbstein** is also one of our newer choir members. He was recently featured as one of the "Voices" of Beth Ahabah in the weekly e-news. Please read more details about this inspirational young man in the January 5, 2017 issue.

**David Hiller** has participated in the choir as his schedule permits. He is a regular participant from the pews if not on the *bimah*. His wife Ruby is active in Sisterhood. David is also an active Brotherhood member. (not pictured)

**Ken Roeper** has sung at Beth Ahabah for 12 years. He has also served as the "cantorial soloist" for several summer services. Ken echoes the sentiment of "when we sing, we pray twice." He has been in choirs since elementary school (just a few years back); Ken was president of his high school chorus and sang in county and state-wide competitions. In addition, he sang in college and graduate school as well as performing in a madrigal group. Ken says that "singing is contagious." Everyone in his family sings—even showing off

in karaoke bars! Ken worked in human resources for 20 years and then started a niche enterprise restoring chandeliers and vintage lighting fixtures. He loves working for himself. Ken is also the "first man" to our president Katie. They have been married over 36 years. For fun, Ken and Katie enjoy antiquing. Ken has a passion for stunt kite flying. They have 2 children, Shepherd, recently married and living in Henrico and Jayna who is engaged to be married and living in Denver. Their dog, Lucy, recently celebrated her 15th birthday. Last, but not least, Ken is the energy and director behind the last several *Purim Shpiels*.

**David Sachs** is a "newbie" having joined the choir in August 2016. His musical roots started with a toy piano and plastic toy organ when he was 5. At 6, he was playing piano at his elementary school without a lesson. He continued with lessons in high school and studied independently as an adult. David has worked at several churches in the Richmond area and served as music director-organist at St Barnabas Episcopal Church for 6 years. He is semi-retired as Pastoral Care Coordinator. David's spouse, David, is an RN. They have 3 canine kids. He is grateful to share the gift of music in a sacred space.

**Stanley Ullman** has been a part of the choir on and off for many years. Stan is a huge sports fan and the VCU Rams often win out in the competition for choir. His family was raised at Beth Ahabah and Stan is a long time member.

**Ricky Williams** has been with the Beth Ahabah choir for a short time, but his musical talents extend to his high school where he is very musically involved. In addition, Ricky can be found



## CBA COMMUNITY

### IN SYMPATHY TO THE FAMILIES OF....

#### Mario Kuperminc

husband of Denise Kuperminc

#### Richard Strause

brother of Cathy Plotkin

#### John Brush, Sr.

father of Sallie (Billy) Thalhimer  
grandfather of Elizabeth (Ryan)

Smartt

#### L.J. "Joe" Schwartz

father of Phyllis (Sheldon) Mutchnick  
grandfather of Saul (Sonya)

Mutchnick & Rosa Mutchnick

#### Jack Carver

### MAZAL TOV! GOOD NEWS & SIMCHAS TO:

**Deborah Greenberg** on the birth of her granddaughter, Natalie Elsa Goodman born March 21, 2017. Also to great-grandmother, **Mikki Evens**, great-grandfather, Julian Jacobs and parents, Amanda & Campe Goodman from Boston, MA

### 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>

Music Makers...continued from Page 7

on Sunday mornings in the Religious School as a *madrichim*. His parents, Cheryl Anne and Nello, are role models for *Tikun Olam* as they are involved in Sisterhood and Brotherhood activities.



Tenors: (L to R) Genvieve Dickerson, Sean McElgunn, David Sachs, Michael Kotrady and Stanley Ullman

### INTRODUCING: Sarah Beck-Berman: Clergy Intern /Cantorial Soloist/B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator

This is the last in our series of getting to know the choir. Sarah's beautiful voice has graced the *bimah* for the last 5 years. We asked Sarah the following questions. Here's what she had to say:

**How did you get interested in becoming a cantor?** I grew up the daughter of a Rabbi, and after my *Bat Mitzvah*, I became the go-to person to lead services and chant from the *Torah* when my father was out of town. I have spent a lot of time on the *bimah*, and have made a lot of clergy friends over the years. About three years into my undergraduate studies, I decided to pursue a religious studies degree and go to cantorial school thereafter. There was not any one specific "aha!" moment where I knew that was my path; it was more like the culmination of a lot of different things, particularly

thinking about what I was good at and what I really enjoyed.



Sarah Beck-Berman

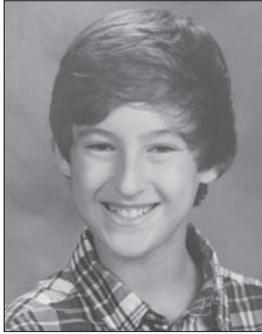
Photo Credit: Doug Buerlein

**What is your favorite style of Jewish music?** Oooh, that is a tough one. I like all Jewish music, from Debbie Friedman to Max Janowsky, from klezmer to maqam. I do have a particular soft spot for maqam, and related forms of Middle Eastern and North African Jewish Music. Maqam really refers to the Classical Arabic style of music, but I like a lot of the eastern styles of Jewish music that we, in our klezmer-drenched society, do not always know about. That being said, klezmer itself is pretty compelling.

**Tell us one thing (you are willing to share) that would surprise us.** When I was 7 and a half years old, I saw Shark Week for the first time on Discovery Channel. Ever since that time, I have been obsessed with sharks. At one point I was seriously considering a career as a shark expert. Ask me the scientific name for the Great White next time you see me at services!

**Tell us about your background and education.** I spent the majority of my pre-high school education in Jewish schools, including both JCDS (a Solomon-Schechter day school) and Rudlin Torah Academy (an Orthodox day school). For high school I attended the Maggie L. Walker Governor's

Music Makers...continues on Page 16

**B'NEI MITZVAH**

**Blair and Brett Bishop**  
Saturday, May 6

Brett and Blair Bishop will be called to the *Torah* as *B'nai Mitzvah* on Saturday, May 6, 2017. Brett and Blair are the identical twin sons of Jodi and Greg Bishop and the younger brothers of Shane. They are the grandsons of Phyllis and Robert Berman and Hattie and Roger Bishop.

Brett and Blair are 7th grade students in the International Baccalaureate program at Tuckahoe Middle School (TMS). They are on the TMS track team and are members of the TMS MathCounts team. Blair is also on the TMS wrestling team. We are very proud of all their hard work at school and earning straight A's since being at TMS.

Brett and Blair both enjoy basketball, running, tennis, video games, movies, spending time with their family and playing with their friends. They also both like performing community service and helping others.

Brett and Blair are excited to celebrate this special day with their family and friends.



**Lucy Strauchler**  
Saturday, May 13

Lucy Belle Strauchler will be called to the *Torah* as a *Bat Mitzvah* on Saturday, May 13, 2017. Lucy is the daughter of Kasi and Adam Strauchler and the sister of Molly and Hopper. She is the granddaughter of Gayle and Buddy Dacus and Linda and Steven Strauchler.

Lucy is a 7th grade honor roll student at Quioccasin Middle School where she cheers and plays soccer. Lucy is also a devoted dancer, taking four dance classes a week and dancing in her studio's hip hop ensemble. Lucy enjoys music, horseback riding and playing with her dogs Lola and Otto. Lucy lights up any room she enters with her high energy and kind spirit.

Lucy's *Mitzvah* Project will benefit research for a cure for leukemia.

Lucy's family is very proud of the hard work she's done to prepare for becoming a *Bat Mitzvah* and looks forward to celebrating with family and friends.

## 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 in a temple blog and in the B'Yachad. Please submit them to Lori Allen at [l.allen@bethahabab.org](mailto:l.allen@bethahabab.org).

*mazal tov!*



*Kristen Demlein*  
Saturday, May 27

Kristen Renee Demlein will be called to the *Torah* as a *Bat Mitzvah* on May 27, 2017. She is the daughter of Melissa and Matthew Demlein, sister of Joshua, and granddaughter of Lorraine and Irvin Bodofsky of Midlothian, Virginia, and Ann Marie and Thomas Demlein of Millis, Massachusetts.

Kristen is a 7th grader at Manchester Middle School. She is a part of the Chesterfield Center Based Gifted program there. In school, Kristen enjoys being a member of the Girls Chorus Club, Majestic Readers Book Club, and French Club. Outside of school, Kristen enjoys playing soccer with the Richmond Kickers Recreational Youth Program and singing in Beth Ahabah's Youth Choir, *Kol Simchah*. Kristen is certified as a Red Cross Babysitter and wants to be a pediatrician when she is older. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, writing short stories, and hanging out with her friends.

For her *Mitzvah* Project, Kristen has collected new and gently used Build-A-Bears and Teddy Bears for the Children's Hospital.

We are extremely proud of Kristen for all her hard work in preparing for her *Bat Mitzvah* and are looking forward to celebrating this very special day with her.

*mazal tov!*



*Emily Dolganski*  
Saturday, June 10

Two years after our family moved to America from Russia, we found out that soon we will have another baby. To give birth to a child in Russia it was impossible for many reasons, but we always had a dream to have more than one child. Even our first son, Oleg, he started from three years old to talk only about having a baby sister. Here in America, one employer asked our father, Yevgeniy, if he's planning on having another baby anytime soon. After saying yes, he lost his job. Some people told us that having another child in America would be very expensive, but we didn't listen to any of them, and we were doing our best to make it happen. Amongst our relatives, in the generation of our children, there were mostly boys, and we thought it would be a boy. But a miracle happened, in May of 2004, exactly in two weeks after dad's and son's birthday's, in our family, not only was a second child born, but it was a baby girl who was named Emily.

Emily grew and developed with her own age. Until the age of three, she grew up at home with the care of her parents and grandparents. After that, she went to her first daycare where she instantly learned English. Now she talks like Russian grammar is less than her English grammar. Somewhere that age, she went to ballet. Emily became a fully developed girl. In every age, she's interested in many activities. She went to: gymnastics, swimming, and karate. In some time, she was mak-

ing loom bands. But most of all, she is even now interested in art, especially drawing. But it's for no reason, she is actually very talented. Emily will draw at any time of day. This is the second year that she's going to an art center and made many wonderful pictures. She loves to read mangas and books without illustrations because she loves to picture the stories and characters in her head.

Our little Emily really loves her parents and is closest to her older brother, Oleg. His first year of moving to college, was the most stressful time for her. And still now, the day of his going back to college, stays to be a sad day. She is very close to her grandparents. And she helps them out with many tasks. Last October, we had a trip to Oleg's college for the Family Day. There the college students made a play about Anne Frank's Diary. Emily took this so serious, that she now owns the book of Anne's Diary and made a school fair project and book report about her, too.

Now Emily is getting closer to becoming a teen, that very often it's not easy as it is for adolescents as it is for adults. But we're trying to successfully and peacefully to handle all problems, and are trying to be positive. God willingly she will be healthy for us all, and to always be proud of her.

*Logan Altomonte*  
Saturday, June 3

Logan Altomonte will be called to the *Torah* as a *Bar Mitzvah* on Saturday, June 3, 2017. He is the son of Lisa and Dennis Altomonte.



*Lilli Singer*  
Saturday, June 17

Lillian Isabella Singer will be called to the *Torah* as a *Bat Mitzvah* on June 17, 2017. She is the daughter of Robert and Jennifer Singer, and the sister of Wesley Everett Singer.

Lilli is in the seventh grade and on the honor roll at Tomahawk Middle School. Lilli and her family moved from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Richmond, Virginia, two years ago. She enjoys art projects and field hockey. She loves animals and children. She looks forward to helping the Henrico Humane Society and playing tennis this summer.

Lilli has worked hard learning Hebrew for her *Bat Mitzvah*. Her family and friends are looking forward to celebrating her accomplishment with a party and family trip to the Outer Banks, North Carolina.



HAPPY  
*Shabbat*

**BETH AHABAH TEENS**

**Teens (8th - 12th Grade)**

On Sunday, May 7th, join Brian in the Youth Lounge for a *Madrichim* social before religious school!

Love roller coasters? Saturday, May 20th is the trip to Kings Dominion! Information will be in your Teen News e-mail.

**Middle School (6th - 8th Grade)**

Love roller coasters? Saturday, May 20th is the trip to Kings Dominion! Information will be in your Middle School News e-mail.

**NEW TECHNOLOGY IS COMING TO BETH AHABAH**

We are currently moving to a new "cloud-based" membership management system, which will provide increased 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.



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## BARBARA & WILLIAM B. THALHIMER, JR. RELIGIOUS SCHOOL



Heather Dinkin  
Religious School Administrator

### Curriculum Comes Alive at Religious School

Through up-to-date textbooks, dedicated teachers and engaging programming, the religious school strives to engender a love and devotion for Judaism and lifelong Jewish learning. Recently, a perfect storm of programming and happenstance brought that philosophy beautifully alive for the fourth graders and their parents.



The fourth grade curriculum includes the study of the Jewish life cycle. As part of learning about Jewish wedding customs, teacher Matt Gaskin led the class in helping plan and take part in a “wedding”. In recognition that a wedding signifies the creation of a new Jewish home, the class prepared by studying and discussing the four foundations of *Shalom Beit* (a peaceful Jewish home and harmonious marriage): God, *Torah*, Community and *Kiddushim* (the Sacred bond of Marriage). They decorated four *Chuppah* poles with words and phrases significant to each of these concepts.



They also prepared to take roles in the wedding. The roles of the bride, groom and Rabbi were filled by adults, but all other roles, from *ketubah* signers, *d'var torah* giver, *chuppah* holders, mothers and fathers of the bride and groom, best man and maid of honor, were



taken by the students. The first couple who agreed to play bride and groom by renewing their vows had to renege at the last minute, Tony and Karen Wharton graciously agreed to step in. The Whartons, parents of the class *madrich* (teacher aide) Campbell Wharton, had previously only had a



civil ceremony, so the *ketubah* became valid and the vows real, giving the day a lovely emotional and spiritual resonance.



The class prepared the *D'var Torah* that was delivered at the *tisch*, and assigned and reviewed their roles for the service, while Rabbi Scott Nagel met with the parents and led a study session on Marriage in the *Torah*, *Talmud*, and *Midrash*. The students then joined the parents for the big event, the parents acting as the wedding guests. The fathers and sons joined the *tisch*, delivered the *D'var Torah* and had a hearty grape juice *Kiddush*, while the daughters and moms enjoyed the *bedecken*, complimenting and veiling the bride. The *ketubah* was marched across the room for signing followed by the procession, and then service with the *Sheva B'rachot* read by students, vows and glass breaking. *Mazel Tov!* It was, of course, followed by an enthusiastic *horah*, toasts, and a reception with wedding cake.



A communal wedding ring from the Museum & Archives collection.

*Reprinted with permission from the Richmond Times-Dispatch*

## ATLEE HIGH'S CHORUS DIRECTOR, MR. B, HAS A DISTINCT VOICE - AND STORY

BY Michael Thompson  
Apr 16, 2017

It was the first day back for Hanover County students after a January snow-storm had left much of the region layered in snow, but Natan Berenshteyn wasn't looking to ease back into things.

The choral director at Atlee High School pushed his students to hit the right notes. He called out reminders on tone and rhythm. He demanded better diction. And Mr. B, as some affectionately call him, mixed in plenty of his good-natured humor.

"I know I'm being annoying today," Berenshteyn told his students. "That's because I hear it. It's right there."

Perched above Berenshteyn, his singers and a piano, there are dozens of trophies that stand as gleaming testament to his dedication to music. For the past 18 years, Berenshteyn has taught at Atlee, where he not only strengthens voices but asks students to research songs and develop themes for concerts.

Beyond the music, there's usually a brief geography lesson for incoming freshmen.

"They hear the accent," Berenshteyn explained. "They ask, and I show them on the map."

The map – of Moldova, a former Soviet republic – and the Eastern European accent are just part of the story. It was in his homeland where Berenshteyn developed a passion for music while enduring the

anti-Semitism of the day. It was his family's decision to emigrate in 1990 that led him on the path to Atlee.

The son of a barber and an accountant, Berenshteyn was born in Chisinau, Moldova's capital city. He grew up in a three-room, 550-square-foot apartment with his parents, brother, uncle, grandmother and grandfather. Their life was lower middle class by Soviet standards – and closer to poverty by American ones.



Natan Berenshteyn

Photo Credit: Steven Longstaff

"We never had a car," Berenshteyn said. "We never had a bank account. We never had a credit card. Almost everything the family was making was directed toward food and clothes."

In addition to regular school, Berenshteyn attended a specialized music school for piano, the instrument he began playing around age 6. His parents encouraged his love of music – "The Witch," a small, dissonant and sharp piece by Tchaikovsky, was an early favorite.

"My mother had this fantasy, I imagine, that one of her children was going to be a musician and the other one is going to be an artist – that is to say, a painter," said Berenshteyn, whose younger brother and only sibling is an attorney in Abing-

don. "I had a supportive family who were willing to put me on the bus three, four times a week and travel with me on the bus to this music school and back."

In his teens, Berenshteyn got hooked by American jazz artists such as Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong by way of records that got into the Soviet Union if the authorities deemed them to be "anti-capitalist." From jazz it was onto American Broadway music from the likes of Irving Berlin, George Gershwin and Cole Porter.

Berenshteyn eventually studied classical piano at the Chisinau College of Music, and he earned a graduate degree in jazz piano and conducting from the Moldova State Institute of Art.

But Berenshteyn's progress in the music world occurred in a society where anti-Semitism was common and unofficially backed by the state.

At the time, it was nearly impossible for Jewish families to emigrate from the Soviet Union, but neither were Jews allowed to fully assimilate into society. Just requesting to leave meant lost jobs and getting blacklisted.

"We were under a tremendous amount of pressure," Berenshteyn said. "If you were denied (permission to leave), then you kind of lost your life. However little you have, there is always a way to make it less."

Much of the anti-Semitism of Berenshteyn's youth was quiet and subdued. The official party line was that everyone was equal, but discrimination occurred behind closed doors, Berenshteyn said. Sometimes the bigotry was more explicit, as when Berenshteyn was walking home from a college class and encoun-

tered demonstrators carrying a banner that read, "Drown the Jews in Russian blood."

"The land is so poor, there are no jobs, no perspectives, no strategical outlook, and yet everybody blames you for that because you're of a different ethnicity or religious beliefs," Berenshteyn said. "Not that they blame you, but you know they talk about you. You're not quite a member of this community."

Berenshteyn said that when his grandfather arrived in Chisinau in the late 1920s, there were dozens of small synagogues, but by the early 1950s, only one was left. Berenshteyn's bar mitzvah consisted of dinner at the family's apartment and his grandfather saying a couple of prayers.

"You have to keep it to yourself," Berenshteyn said. "People did whatever it takes so they can have a normal life and a normal life for their children."

When it became easier to leave as the Soviet Union came undone in the late 1980s, the family decided together that it was time to take a chance at building another, better life.

In 1990, six members of the Berenshteyn family – each with \$97 and carrying two suitcases stuffed with clothes – boarded a plane for Richmond International Airport. The family had very little information about America but were relieved to be coming to Richmond: Berenshteyn and his mother were big fans of Margaret Mitchell's "Gone With the Wind."

"It was not necessarily an honest assessment of history the way I understood it then or the way I understand it now, but you have a romantic notion to it," Berenshteyn said. "I'm also a strong believer in the strong female character in the book." The family's transition from Soviet refu-

gees to American citizens was supported by the Richmond chapter of Jewish Family Services. The biggest question for Berenshteyn was how he could make a living through music.

Sydney Fleischer of Jewish Family Services recalled how she got Berenshteyn to play at her mother's 70th birthday party. "I had heard he was amazing and that his specialty was American jazz," she said.

To learn English, Berenshteyn worked for a few months at a Hardee's fast-food restaurant, where he made \$4 an hour. He then landed a gig playing piano with the School of Richmond Ballet.

Berenshteyn eventually got an undergraduate degree in music education and a graduate degree in performance from Virginia Commonwealth University, where he met his wife, an exchange student from St. Petersburg at the time. He taught in Newport News before getting hired by Atlee in 1999.

Atlee Principal John Wheeler said Berenshteyn is a model of professionalism.

"I remember him being passionate and excited," Wheeler said of his first meeting with Berenshteyn. "You could tell he was immensely talented."

Becky Bertrand of the Atlee High School Chorus Boosters said Berenshteyn's work ethic and enthusiasm spread to his students.

"You can tell it's his life," Bertrand said. "It's not just his job."

Berenshteyn's approach to music education is rooted in how his mother raised him: not with force but through comprehension.

"Her pedagogical approach was to talk to a 6-year-old like he's 26," Berenshteyn

said. "Understand what you know. Understand what your goals are. Go pursue them. If you need help, we'll provide it." Family continues to be an important part of Berenshteyn's life. He visits his parents and grandmother multiple times a week at their West End homes. His father still cuts his hair. Berenshteyn leads the choir at Congregation Beth Ahabah in the Fan District.

And his students are a form of family, too.

"I see music to be a window into the soul of the society and the window into the soul of a given individual," Berenshteyn said. "I can guarantee this music is absolutely essential for existence. We need to give this to kids somehow because that will make them into humans."

## **A Warm Welcome to Our New Members!**

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

**Raisa & Leyb Gorbatyy  
Angela & Joseph Dreyfuss  
Regina & Quincy Williams**

*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



BETH AHABAH  
LEGACY CIRCLE



## HELP BUILD OUR FUTURE—JOIN THE LEGACY CIRCLE

*We used to think that legacy gifts required complicated legal documents. In fact, making a bequest to Beth Ahabah can be very simple. Even modest legacy gifts will add up and help ensure a bright future for our temple.*

*Laura and Rob Davidson*



Beth Ahabah's new Legacy Circle is for those members who have helped secure our future by making a legacy gift to the temple as part of their estate plan. Our Legacy Circle is part of the Life and Legacy program, which Beth Ahabah and other Richmond Jewish organizations have 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 are closing in on our initial goal of 18 new participants in the first year of our Legacy Circle program. By reaching this goal, Beth Ahabah will qualify for a substantial incentive grant from the Grinspoon Foundation. 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. All Legacy Circle members will be invited to a community-wide celebration on May 18th at the Weinstein JCC.

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)



## Beth Ahabah Men of Reform Judaism

by David Feibish

President Beth Ahabah Brotherhood/MRJ

Mazel Tov to JEFF LAVELLE, the new incoming President of Beth Ahabah Brotherhood/Men of Reform Judaism.

**The Brotherhood Slate for 2017-18 is:**

President: Jeff Lavelle

Immediate Past President: David Feibish

Co-Treasurers/Membership: Adam Beale & Ionel Kahn

VP Communications: Ron Kasoff

VP Programming : by Committee

Caritas Coordinator: Chuck Greenberg

### Board Members:

Steve Bernstein, Jeff Keil, Dan

Rosenthal, Chuck Greenberg,

Sean McElgunn, Nello Williams,

Ken Roeper, Rob Davidson,

Adam Nelson, Ken Roeper, Mark Schein, John Marshak, & Alan Corbett

A sincere thank you to all these men of Brotherhood who agreed to serve and continue to give their time serving the Congregation in so many ways.

Brotherhood is sponsoring several upcoming fun and exciting events in the next few months. Look for the details & sign-up info on the Temple web site, e-News and Bulletin.

### Saturday, May 20th RICHMOND FLYING

**SQUIRRELS vs. the Harrisburg Senators** Game time is 6:05 PM and is followed by FIREWORKS

Cost: \$5.00 per person  
(General Admission seats)

Contact Rob Davidson at [rob.davidson@aftonchemical.com](mailto:rob.davidson@aftonchemical.com) for additional information.

### Saturday, June 10th

Beth Ahabah Brotherhood is Proud to Sponsor a **White Water Rafting Trip on the James River**

9:30 am – 12 noon

Beyond Boundaries, a Richmond-based non-profit outdoor adventure program will guide us down the beautiful James River. Limited registrations so sign up early! You will receive complete instructions where to park and what to wear. Brotherhood Subsidized cost only: \$50 per person

Contact Ken Roeper at [roepers@com-cast.net](mailto:roepers@com-cast.net) for additional information

### JULY 21ST AND AUGUST 18TH BROTHERHOOD SUMMER SHABBAT COOKOUTS

ENRICH AND INVIGORATE YOUR SUMMER WITH A BROTHERHOOD SPONSORED EVENT

David Feibish  
Brotherhood President

Music Makers...continued from Page 8

School, and mine was the first class to spend all four years in the Maggie Walker building. From there I went to VCU, first as an International Studies major, then graduating in 2011 with a degree in Religious Studies.

In general, I have always enjoyed learning, all things and all subjects. I took ancient Latin and Greek in high school, and Italian in college. I took piano lessons for nearly ten years, stopping during college. In college, I did focused study on Eastern religions, including a course called Tibetan Buddhist Reason

& Debate which forever altered my approach to structured thinking and argument.

**How does singing influence your spirituality?** Singing has always been something deeply personal for me. From my *Bat Mitzvah* onward I sang in the volunteer choir at my synagogue. Music and singing have always been my main source of connection to Jewish prayer, holidays, and otherwise! (Okay, maybe tied with food.) I never really considered a career as a professional musician in any non-spiritual capacity; I prefer leading services to more performance-style singing like in a concert. I believe that everyone can

sing, and that our voices have a collective power to make our Jewish experience transformative and meaningful.





## Beth Ahabah Women of Reform Judaism

by Meg Marshak

President Beth Ahabah Sisterhood/WRJ



The women of Beth Ahabah showed their creative talent on Tuesday, March 28 at Muse Paint Bar. Twenty women were led through a the wonderful creative experience of painting a tree. After a few 'noshes' and some beverages we were ready to PAINT! Each of us approached our blank canvas with different amounts of trepidation. Colors of paint were already on the table and our instructor led us through the application of the base coat and then constructing our tree and filling in the leaves. Of course the conversation flowed and there were comments and laughs along the way. Everyone left with a wonderful expression of the interpretation of the master painting and enjoyed relaxing with our fellow women.

As I write this, Sisterhood *Shabbat* looms for us and I hope that you will be able to say (by the time you read this) that you were there sharing the *Shabbat* Services and the activities on Saturday. Sisterhood plans to be a part of *Mitzvah* Day and will begin to plan for next year. If you have any ideas or would like to get involved with the planning and execution of the events, do not hesitate to call or write to me

with your ideas. We accept all thoughts and help with our plans.

Remember Beth Ahabah-Women of Reform Judaism represents you!

*Editor's Note: The Elie Wiesel poem featured in the Voices profile of Karen Olshanky in the April issue was incomplete. The full text of the poem follows below.*

### A-7713

My arm displays black markings,  
A-7713,  
a tattoo that will never erase.  
These numbers don't name me.  
I am Elie.

I have thoughts, feelings, a family.  
I, on the precipice of manhood,  
am driven down crevices  
of unspeakable horrors.  
I am whipped to shreds,  
scarred by craven men  
infected by a vile virus.

My life, once full of promises,  
now broken, incinerated  
by a suffocating ride in a crammed  
cattle car to a destination  
of deprivation, humiliation, death.

In narrow bunks infested with vermin  
my starving body clings to a slim  
shimmer of a Sunday reminiscence:  
a placid walk,  
playing stickball,  
studying books  
of my mysterious God.

I am an orphan of life,  
the sins of my captors  
an attempted theft.

and yet -and yet -and yet

I will give the world my greatest gift.  
I will be a witness.  
I will never forget.  
I am Elie Wiesel.

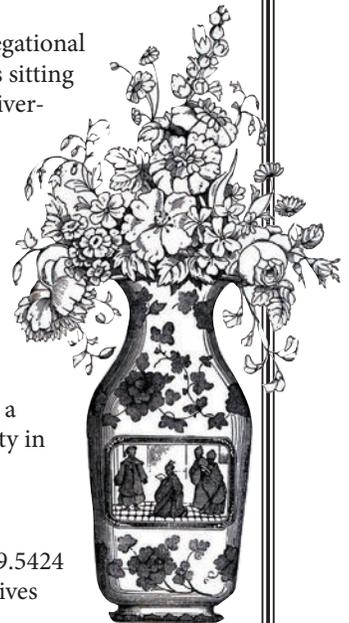
In memory of Elie Wiesel  
1928-2016

## 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 [liskiles@verizon.net](mailto:liskiles@verizon.net); or Miri Eynan at 804.269.5424 or [pink4good@gmail.com](mailto:pink4good@gmail.com) to begin touching lives one family at a time.





## RENATE FORSSMANN-FALK



### TREKKING KILIMANJARO

It started in spring of 2014 with an advertisement of the Massey Cancer Center. It showed a man hiking in a desolate landscape. The voice said something like “He finished his cancer treatment and is now on the way to a better place—Kilimanjaro.” It touched me deeply. I knew I had to go up there. I love mountains, hiking and nature. It is also a connection with my mother who trekked the Alps with my grandfather. When life was rough, she would say “Look up to the mountain, there will be help.” I too, when life poses struggles, find solace in the solitude of nature. Eventually, I figured out that my mother cited Psalm 121.

Last July I was ready physically and mentally to go on this journey. I knew I would make it provided altitude illness would not force me to abandon the trek. This would have been okay. It was the journey, not the thrill or the achievement! I was fortunate to have my niece Anja as my companion. When we arrived in Tanzania, we had a day of rest before starting the ascent. It was a caravan: 6 guides, 56 porters, cooks etc. and 13 trekkers. The group was just terrific. I had a little interaction with the head guide because he insisted I use trekking poles. However, I convinced him that I will be true to my younger year’s nickname “mountain goat” and that I knew when to use them for safety reasons.

Slowly, step by step, we went up crossing the five climate zones: rain forest, heath, moorland, alpine desert and finally the arctic summit. Every climate zone had its special beauty. I

was most intrigued by the Alpine desert and the arctic zone. Its desolateness was captivating. It is indeed a desert of lava and sand without anything alive.

We had chosen a long route, the Western Approach, making sure that we were properly acclimatized. On the seventh day we arrived at the last camp before summiting. After dinner, we got instruction of what to expect the next day: a 10 to 12 hours climb with an elevation gain of 4,010'. The Uhuru Peak, the summit, is the highest point of the crater rim with 19,341'. That night I could not sleep; I was overcome by missing Hans so much. I remembered what I said to my women chavurah friends: When the mountain seems to wear me out, Hans’ voice of admiration and love when he used to say “Ach, meine Liebste” would bring me up the mountain. It sure did.

Am I proud of the accomplishment? Of course! However, it was a spiritual journey into the past. The dark clouds have vanished and gates for a rewarding future have opened. Now, I can focus on what I wrote in an essay while teaching in the Women’s Study Program at VCU. The essence of the essay was that I would like to earn the inscription on my gravestone “Here rests a wise woman”. Indeed, Kilimanjaro was a journey to a better place.

Renate Forssmann-Falck  
November 2016



# VOICES

DAVID GARDNER



As I approached my 70th birthday and retirement about three years ago, I began to think about new adventures and challenges. In the past I had run marathons, cycled, skied, played tennis, etc.—all of which provided balance in my life to offset the stresses of my academic and clinical pursuits. A good friend and fellow cyclist put the bug in my ear about doing a triathlon—not a crazy ironman triathlon, but a much more doable sprint triathlon. Triathlons consist of a swim, a bike ride, and a run. The cycling and running weren't an issue for me. The problem—I couldn't swim more than 50 yards without feeling breathless and exhausted. What to do? The only solution was to learn how to swim at the age of 67—a significant challenge for me since I have never particularly enjoyed the water. I found a very motivating coach at the local YMCA, and started taking regular lessons. Suffice it to say, I will never be Michael Phelps, but with some practice and determination I was able to slowly increase my swimming distance. In May, 2014, I started (and finished) my first sprint triathlon! Over the subsequent 3 years I have finished six more triathlons, and I am now hooked. I continue to train with my tri-buddy, Ike Koziol, and we did our most recent triathlon together in July in Charlottesville. My goal is to finish a triathlon when I'm 80—just 10 short years from now. I guess you can teach an old dog new tricks!

#### Editor's Note:

"Voices" is a 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](mailto:l.allen@bethahabah.org).

## Shavuot

*Shavuot*, known as the Festival of the Giving of the *Torah*, is reflected in the Bible, which recounts how, after the Exodus from Egypt, the Children of Israel proceeded to Mount Sinai in the desert. Moses ascended the mountain to meet God, who gave him the Ten Commandments, which were written on two tablets to be delivered to the Children of Israel.

According to the *Torah*, it took precisely 49 days, or seven weeks, for the ancient Israelites to travel from Egypt to the foot of Mount Sinai. The *Torah* commands: "And you shall proclaim that day (the 50th day) to be a holy convocation!" (*Leviticus 23:21*). The name *Shavuot*, "Weeks," symbolizes the completion of this seven-week journey. The rabbis tightened this connection by associating *Shavuot* with Moses' receiving the *Torah* from God atop Mount Sinai.

*Shavuot* also is a harvest holiday. In the time of the Temple, the ancient Israelites brought their first fruits to the Temple to offer to God at *Shavuot*. Along with *Sukkot* and Passover, it is one of the *Shalosh Regalim* (Three Pilgrimage Festivals), during which people gathered in Jerusalem with their agricultural offerings.

*Shavuot* is known by several names: *Chag Hashavuot* (the Festival of Weeks), *Chag Habikkurim* (the Feast of the First Fruits), and *Chag Hakatzir* (the Festival of Reaping). Ashkenazi Jews may pronounce and write the name of the holiday as *Shavuos*.

## Why We Read The Book of Ruth on Shavuot

The connections between this story and the spring harvest festival.

By Rabbi Ronald H. Isaacs

<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/why-do-we-read-the-book-of-ruth-on-shavuot/>

In traditional settings, the Book of Ruth is read on the second day of *Shavuot*. The book is about a Moabite woman who, after her husband dies, follows her Israelite mother-in-law, Naomi, into the Jewish people with the famous words "whither you go, I will go, wherever you lodge, I will lodge, your people will be my people, and your God will be my God." She asserts the right of the poor to glean the leftovers of the barley harvest, breaks the normal rules of behavior to confront her kinsman

Shavuot...continued from Page 19

Boaz, is redeemed by him for marriage, and becomes the ancestor of King David.



The custom of doing this is already mentioned in the talmudic tractate of *Soferim* (14:16), and the fact that the first chapter of the *Midrash* of Ruth deals with the giving of the *Torah* is evidence that this custom was already well established by the time this *Midrash* was compiled. [Tractate *Soferim* is one of the latest books of the *Talmud*, probably dating no earlier than the eighth century.]

There are many explanations given for the reading of Ruth on *Shavuot*. The most quoted reason is that Ruth's coming to Israel took place around the time of *Shavuot*, and her acceptance into the Jewish faith was analogous of the acceptance of the Jewish people of God's *Torah*.

A second explanation relates to genealogy. Since the Book of Ruth ends with the genealogy of David, whose forbearer Ruth was, it has been suggested that it is read on *Shavuot* because there is a legend that David died on *Shavuot*.

Another reason for the reading of Ruth on *Shavuot* is that its story takes place at harvest time, and *Shavuot* also occurs at the time of the spring harvest.

Excerpted with permission from *Every Person's Guide to Shavuot* (Jason Aronson, Inc).

## Shavuot At Home

By MJL Staff

<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/shavuot-at-home/>

*Shavuot* is a festival with both agricultural and historical significance. The most ancient references to *Shavuot*, in the *Torah*, refer to a harvest festival, the "festival of first fruits." Both of these are reflected in the various alternative names for *Shavuot*, *Hag HaKatzir* (harvest festival), and *Yom HaBikkurim* (day of the first fruits). Another name is *Zeman Matan Torataynu* (time of the giving of *Torah*), as it was calculated to be upon this day that the Israelites received the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai. All of the above have a part to play in the home rituals and food eaten on the festival of *Shavuot*.

There is no Jewish law regarding home practices or rituals on *Shavuot*. Jewish practice regarding food on *Shavuot* is the result of customs and traditions. The main custom is the eating of dairy dishes, mainly dishes containing milk products and cheese. There are a number of theories about how this practice developed. In chapter four of *Song of Songs*, which is a beautiful love poem containing wonderful descriptions of spring in the Holy Land, it states that "honey and milk are under your tongue." The poem was interpreted by the ancient rabbis to be a metaphor for the love between God and Israel and the "honey and milk" of that verse were interpreted to mean *Torah*. Consequently Jews eat milk products on *Shavuot*, the commemoration of the time they received *Torah* on Mount Sinai; many traditional Jews eat dairy as the main meal on the first day of *Shavuot* and meat as the main meal on the second day.

Some other reasons for eating milk-containing products are as follows: At the Passover *seder* there were two sacrificial offerings on the *seder* plate, the shankbone and the egg. Likewise, *Shavuot* focuses on two food items,

milk and meat, to reflect the sacrificial offerings of *Shavuot*. The custom for those who mark two days of *Shavuot* is to eat milk products on the first day and meat on the second day.

An alternative reason for milk on the first day and meat on the second is linked to Exodus 23:19, which states, "You shall not seethe a kid in its mother's milk." This was extrapolated to mean that dairy and meat and milk products should not be eaten at the same meal—one of the basic laws of keeping kosher. Another compelling reason for consumption of dairy rather than meat products on *Shavuot* is so that the Jews will not be reminded of the sin of the Golden Calf, when Moses was so angry with the people that he broke the sacred tablets he dictated from God's direct revelation.

Finally, there is an explanation that focuses on the reception of the *kashrut* (dietary) laws. It is only after the revelation that the Israelites would have been aware of laws of *kashrut* and thus aware that they had no immediately available kosher meat to eat. Consequently, they ate dairy products. The *Torah* was gained by giving up excess, showing restraint and self-control. It is thus more fitting to commemorate its reception by showing restraint and giving up meat for that day.

Two special *challot* are baked for *Shavuot*. As there were two breads offered in the Temple, so Jews eat two *challot*. It is a special feature of *Shavuot* to place a braid in the shape of a ladder on top of the bread. In Hebrew, letters all have numerical values assigned to them; the word for ladder in Hebrew, "*sulam*," adds up to the same number as "Sinai."

One of the old Eastern European customs associated with *Shavuot* is that young children between three and five were introduced to *yeshivah* study, the study of *Torah*, at this time of year. They were given cakes, honey and candy to associate *Torah* study with

Shavuot...continues on Page 21

Shavuot...continued from Page 20

sweetness and joy.

Another dietary practice of *Shavuot* was to eat triangular “*kreplach*,” or dumplings. The three-cornered shape reflects the three patriarchs by whose merit the Israelites received *Torah*. It also reflects the three categories of Jews; Kohen, Levi and Israel, as well as the three sections of the Hebrew Bible (*Tanakh*), *Torah*, *Neviim* (prophets) and *Ketuvim* (writings).

In addition to triangles, round shapes also play a symbolic role on *Shavuot*. The circle manifested in round *challot* may be interpreted as a symbol of *shelemut*, spiritual integrity, that Jews achieved on *Shavuot* when they were given the *Torah*. This fits with the Rabbinic reading of the Sinaitic revelation as the day when the two types of *Torahs*—the written and the oral—were given to the Jewish people, the circle representing the unity of two diverse parts of Judaism.

### ***Shavuot* in Modern Times** New ceremonies and rituals are introduced



Shavuot celebration in Kiryat Ono, Israel circa 1950. (PikiWiki Israel/Wikimedia Commons)

By Lesli Koppelman Ross  
<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/shavuot-in-modern-times/>

Early in the 19th century, the German Reform movement, which had eliminated *Bar Mitzvah* as the “coming of age” ceremony for its 13-year-old boys, instituted a new initiation into Jewish responsibility for its boys and girls: confirmation. Designed as the culmination of a course of study for teens, it

was originally held on the Sabbath during Passover, *Sukkot*, or *Hanukkah*.

Within a few years, it was moved to *Shavuot*, the holiday appropriate for expressing commitment to Jewish ideals and Jewish life, when the voluntary acceptance of God’s law is commemorated. Adopted by the Conservative movement and even some Orthodox congregations after being introduced in America in 1846, confirmation grew in popularity, becoming a widespread feature on the first night or first morning of *Shavuot*. [Today, Orthodox and the vast majority of Conservative congregations do not hold confirmation ceremonies.]

In Israel the pioneers of the early 20th century who reclaimed the Land refocused on the agricultural aspects of the holiday. In modern *bikkurim* festivals, children dressed in white, wearing floral wreaths, and carrying baskets of produce from their local villages and *kibbutzim* (communal farms) joined parades and processions to ceremoniously present their first fruits amid great pageantry. Reading poems, singing, dancing, displaying artwork, and presenting dramatic performances accompanied the donations, which were sold to benefit the Jewish National Fund. [Known in Hebrew as *Keren Kayemet le-Yisrael*, this was the fund created to purchase land from Arab landowners with the aim of settling Jewish pioneers on it.]

*Shavuot* continues to be observed this way in Israel and, throughout the Jewish world, with synagogue services.

Excerpted from *Celebrate! The Complete Jewish Holiday Handbook*. Reprinted with permission of the publisher (Jason Aronson Inc).

### ***Challah* Panzanella Salad Recipe**

*A summery Italian salad gives new life to day-old crusty bread.*

By Shannon Sarna | August 24, 2016  
<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/the-nosher/challah-panzanella-salad-recipe/>

Panzanella salad is about as classic summer (and Italian) as it gets. Day-old, crusty bread takes on a new, fresher life when paired with juicy summer tomatoes, veggies and a light dressing. There are so many variations of this beloved salad, but to me they all scream one simple thing: summer. Also resourcefulness. Also delicious. Ok, this salad screams three things to me.

I recommend using challah that has been sitting for a few days. If challah seems on the softer side, toast it briefly in an oven heated at 300 degrees in a single layer on a baking sheet for 10-15 minutes, until golden. You can also toast in a pan on the stovetop in a small amount of butter, oil and garlic if desired.

#### **INGREDIENTS**

##### **For the salad:**

2 cups cubed leftover challah  
1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved OR 2 medium Jersey or beefsteak tomatoes, cut into large chunks  
6 oz fresh mozzarella balls  
1/2 red onion, sliced thin  
1/4 cup fresh basil leaves

##### **For the dressing:**

1/2 cup olive oil  
1 Tbsp red wine vinegar  
2 tsp lemon zest  
juice of 1/2 lemon  
salt and pepper

**DIRECTIONS:** Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Spread out challah cubes in single layer. Dress lightly with olive oil if desired. Bake until just toasted and golden, around 10-15 minutes. Remove from oven and allow to cool.

Add toasted challah to large bowl. Toss with tomatoes, red onion and fresh basil. Whisk together ingredients for salad. Add salt and pepper to taste. Toss salad with dressing. Serve immediately.

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We want to keep you posted!

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.

## CBA LIFE:

Scenes from the congregational *Seder* dinner in April.



Bring your family and friends to our next "Come as You Are" congregational *Shabbat* dinner and service on the first Friday of each month. Look for details in the Temple-news.

*Chag Shavot Sameach*

*May 30 - June 1*

## MAY & JUNE 2017 SCHEDULE OF *SHABBAT* & HOLIDAY WORSHIP

### Friday, May 5

1st Friday <i>Shabbat</i> Service – Come As You Are	
Snack	6:00 PM
Service	6:15 PM
Dinner (By Reservation)	7:00 PM
Activities for Children (in the Joel House)	7:30 PM

### Saturday, May 6

<i>B'nei Mitzvah of Blair and Brett Bishop</i>	10:30 AM
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### Friday, May 12

Annual Meeting <i>Shabbat</i> Dinner	6:00 PM
Installation <i>Shabbat</i> Service w/ Choir	7:30 PM

### Saturday, May 13

<i>Bat Mitzvah of Lucy Strauchler</i>	10:30 AM
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### Friday, May 19

Confirmation Class <i>Shabbat</i> Service	7:30 PM
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### Friday, May 26

<i>Shabbat</i> Service	7:30 PM
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### Saturday, May 27

<i>Bat Mitzvah of Kristen Demlein</i>	10:30 AM
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### Monday, May 30

<i>Erev Shavuot</i> Service, Study and Snack	6:00 PM
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### Friday, June 2

1st Friday <i>Shabbat</i> Service – Come As You Are	
Snack	6:00 PM
Service	6:15 PM
Dinner (By Reservation)	7:00 PM
Activities for Children (in the Joel House)	7:30 PM

### Saturday, June 3

<i>Bar Mitzvah of Logan Altomonte</i>	10:30 AM
---------------------------------------	----------

### Friday, June 9

<i>Pre-Neg</i>	6:00 PM
<i>Shabbat</i> Service	6:15 PM

### Saturday, June 10

<i>Bat Mitzvah of Emily Dolganski</i>	10:30 AM
---------------------------------------	----------

### Friday, June 16

<i>Pre-Neg</i>	6:00 PM
<i>Shabbat</i> Service	6:15 PM

### Saturday, June 17

<i>Bat Mitzvah of Lilli Singer</i>	10:30 AM
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CALENDAR INFORMATION IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE, please check the calendar online at [bethahabah.org](http://bethahabah.org)

### 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](http://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.

Now Open in the Beth Ahabah  
Museum & Archives

## COUNT ME IN! RICHMOND'S JEWS RESPOND TO WORLD WAR I

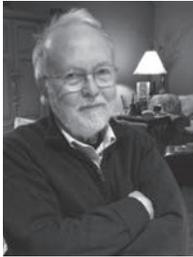
This exhibit honors the Richmond Jewish community's support for the war effort—from those who volunteered at home to those who fought abroad for justice and freedom in service to their country.

## BETH AHABAH MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

### Jewish Heritage Begins at Home

An important part began here at Beth Ahabah 40 years ago!

by David Farris, Director



David Farris, Director

May is American Jewish Heritage Month, which reminds us of that we need to always be aware of the people and events that have contributed to the well-being of the Jewish people in general and Beth Ahabah in particular. Sometimes we forget that we do not have to look very far to see major parts of our heritage.

The Beth Ahabah Museum & Archives has been a major contributor to the preservation of the history of the Congregation and the Jewish history of Richmond since May of 1977. This year's congregational meeting will mark the 40th anniversary of this organization, which has become nationally and internationally known for its efforts through its exhibits and publications.

By 1977 the Congregation had accumulated a significant collection of ritual objects, letters, photographs, historical documents and other things of importance. A group of members recognized that unless this collection was cared for in a professional manner and protected, it would lose its identity and perhaps end up in forgotten boxes. This meant that something far beyond simply putting the collection in a storage closet was called for. These members, whose family names read like a "Who's Who" of Richmond

Jewry, created a trust under Virginia law. It provides protection and ensures that these precious things, though "retired from active duty and in assisted living", are still available for use in appropriate educational activities. The descendants of these distinguished members are still members today.



In 2017, the Museum & Archives marks 40 years since its founding.

Now, 40 years later, the collection is housed in a building owned by the Congregation at 1109 W. Franklin St. next to the administration building. The trust employs three part-time staff members who operate the collection as a Museum & Archives for the benefit of the Congregation and the Jewish Community. It is financially independent thanks to the generosity of the members of Beth Ahabah and several foundations, and receives only certain administrative support from the Congregation. A Board of Trustees, under the leadership of President Martin Miller, sets direction for the organization and either originates or approves of the major activities carried out each year.

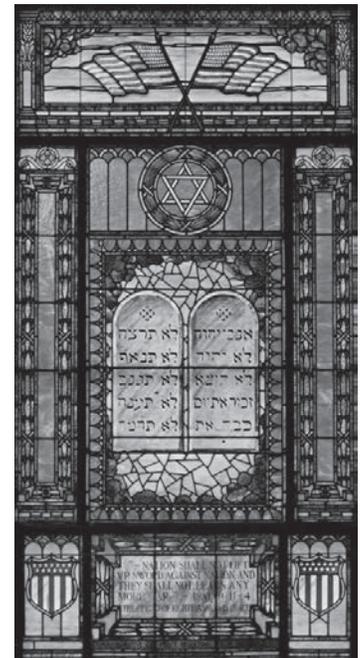
So, Jewish life goes on. In our corner of the world Beth Ahabah and its Museum & Archives play an important role in preserving our history and making it available to others. Both organizations

are apples that did not fall far from the Jewish tree. We should never forget that we do not need to look far away for our heritage, as a vital part of it is here in Richmond and is our history as well.

Please pay us a visit, and bring your visitors. We are here from 10 - 3, Sunday through Thursday, and on other days and times by appointment. We don't want to miss any opportunity to tell our stories.

### TREASURES FROM THE COLLECTION:

The 100th anniversary of the United States' entry into World War I was observed on April 6, 2017. Since May is Jewish American Heritage Month, it is a good time to point out World War I



Beth Ahabah's "Peace Window" was donated by H.S. Binswanger to commemorate the end of World War I.

reminders here at Beth Ahabah. The "Peace Window" in our Sanctuary, in the center on the west side, was do-

nated by H.S. Binswanger, and was given as “Commemorative of Peace resulting from the World War” in 1921. It is a beautiful depiction of our dual identities as both Americans and Jews. The tablets of the Ten Commandments, identical to those above our Ark, plus the Star of David above them, are enduring symbols of Judaism, while the American flags and shields are symbolic of the patriotism we feel and the honor we give to our citizens who fought for freedom and peace. The biblical quotations on the window relate to the concept of peace: “Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, and they shall not learn any more war – Isaiah 11:4” and “The effect of righteousness is peace.”

There is also a memorial plaque to “the sons of Beth Ahabah who answered their country’s call in the great World War 1914-1918” in the vestibule of the Sanctuary. On this plaque you will see the names of 94 Beth Ahabah men who served in the Armed Forces of the United States during World War I. Not listed are the many individuals, men and women, who worked on the home front as can-teen workers and ambulance drivers for the Red Cross, sellers of Liberty and Victory bonds, or participants in many communal service organizations. An additional 140 Jewish men from Richmond also served in the military. Of the total 234 Jewish soldiers and sailors there were 3 majors, 3 captains, 12 first lieutenants, 11 second lieutenants, 3 naval lieutenants and 18 ensigns.

### *A Gem from the Archives*

A newspaper article published in the Times Dispatch of May 28, 1920 was entitled “Richmond Jews Rendered Remarkable War Service.” This article quoted a recently published volume “The World War Section” which was a 1920 addendum to “The History of the Jews of Richmond” written by Herbert Ezekiel and Gaston Lichtenstein in 1917. The Museum & Archives has many copies of this small but important book, which details the participation of the Jewish citizens of Richmond in the war effort.

One notable story is that the first Richmond man, Jew or non-Jew, to die in the war was Jacob Edel Cohen, who went down with the Lakemoor when it was torpedoed off the coast of Scotland on April 11, 1918. He was 27 years old, a former postal worker and a member of Sir Moses Montefiore Congregation. His name is inscribed on the World War I memorial flag-pole at Byrd Park.

### *Hebrew Cemetery*

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## BETH AHABAH MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

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bama@bethahabah.org

### Currently on Exhibit in the Galleries:

- **Count Me In! Richmond's Jews Respond to World War I**
- **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.

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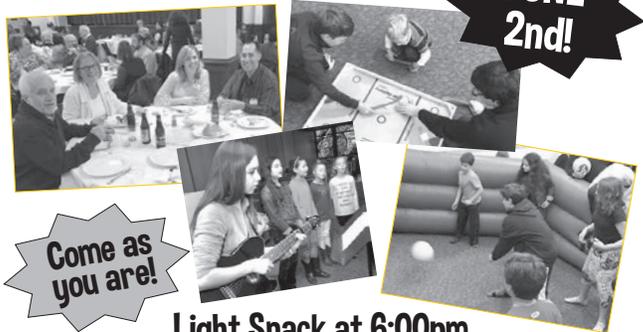
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# First Fridays

*Something for Everyone!*

**JUNE 2nd!**



**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](mailto:a.shiflett@bethahabah.org) or [l.allen@bethahabah.org](mailto: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](http://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 -**

**See You Next Fall!**

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*Come Celebrate a Great Year at  
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*Congregational Dinner &  
Annual Meeting*

*Friday, May 12  
6:00 pm*

*Check the temple e-news for details*