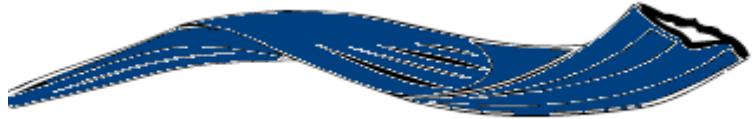


SHOFAR



Monthly Newsletter of the Monterey Peninsula Jewish Community

www.carmelbethisrael.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

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"We Are All in This Together"
by Daniel Troia Page 7



Community-Wide Purim Celebration

MARCH 5, 2023

**10:30 am SUNDAY MORNING during Hesed
Academy!**

COME IN COSTUME & BRING MISHLOACH MANOT!*

To All Congregants and Hesed Academy Families: In the Hebrew month of Adar, we are called upon to bring forth joy! Come discover your joy with us and celebrate our religious freedom and the crazy-making holiday of Purim! *There is also the Purim custom of giving gifts and treats to those in need called "**mishloach manot.**" Hesed Academy families are encouraged to bring socks and healthy packaged snacks for our I-HELP men who will be hosted by CBI that evening.

Morning Schedule:

9:30-10:30 am: Hesed Academy students arrive as usual. Come In Costume! Bring *mishloach manot* – look for the collection basket in our front hall. Students will enjoy baking hamantaschen with our very own specialist: Larry Solow.

Continued on page 4



From the Rabbi's Desk...

I am writing this just days before Susan and I leave for Australia. We will be spending most of my Sabbatical touring Australia, enjoying its beauty while visiting many sites,

including Sydney, Melbourne, the Great Barrier Reef, and Tasmania. Hopefully we will see a variety of wildlife on land and in the water. We plan to spend time meeting at least three local Jewish communities, both on walking tours and at Shabbat services.

While I will miss interacting with our CBI family and participating in our many activities and services, I am glad I am getting away. Some things I will not miss. I look forward to not turning on the news every day and learning about another mass shooting. This year in the United States, we are averaging more than one mass shooting a day. I am overwhelmed by the talking heads discussing why this problem seems to be an American issue. Why don't we take some obvious steps to end this ongoing deadly violence? Way too many people have access to rapid fire weapons. It's time to stop finding reasons why we cannot pass gun laws and, instead, take measures and make decisions to make real progress. How about not letting civilians own machine guns and similar types of weapons?

I look forward to not hearing racist, homophobic, and bigoted statements from our political leaders. Antisemitic tropes and other forms of expressed hatred have no place in Congress. We should never accept any of our elected officials (Democrat or Republican) who make statements that are based on fear and ignorance. Xenophobia should be a thing of the past, not our present reality. One example of this is hearing people discussing the Middle East and pointing at Israel as the source for all the problems there. Talking about how Israel is at the root of Palestinian suffering while ignoring the acts of Hamas or Syria ignores some of the major problems that must be resolved. And how can anyone ignore comments from a member of Congress about "Jewish space lasers starting fires in California?"

I also miss the days before "alternative facts" when our leadership was challenged for not telling the truth. I do not understand how a person like George Santos can be allowed to remain in office. Now that so many of his lies have been clarified, isn't it possible to recall or remove him from office? From everything that has been uncovered about him, he is at best a con man and most

likely a thief. While away, I will do my best not to read or listen to American news reports.

My focus will be on getting to know the Australian communities we visit, especially the Jewish communities where we will go for Shabbat. I look forward to taking pictures of animals only found "down under." I relish the thought of exploring beautiful regions on foot, in vehicles, and while swimming.

While away, I will miss making phone calls and writing letters to those celebrating birthdays and anniversaries. Please know that I am sending you my blessings from afar for your important life cycle events. My plan is to return fully rejuvenated and ready to jump right back into CBI life. Just two days after landing, we will celebrate Purim together. May you have a healthy and happy month while I am away.

PS-There is a good chance as you are reading this that I am on a plane returning home!

rosemarylande@gmail.com or Charlotte Salomon, Dir. of Membership, at 925-519-4477 or [charlotte@carmelbethisrael.org](\"mailto:charlotte@carmelbethisrael.org\"). Thank you!'"/>

Calling all Charoset Makers, Horseradish Tasters, and Shank Bone Aficionados-- CBI's Community Seder Needs You!

CBI's Community Seder is one of our most popular events, but the magic doesn't happen on its own--please volunteer to join our Community Seder Committee under the able guidance of Rosemary Lande, Chair, and Vic and Sylvia Krimsley, Chairs Emeriti. Advance meetings will be few--the Committee's primary tasks are charoset-making and "day of" Seder plate set-up and event clean-up (Thurs., April 6). If you are ready and able to help, please contact Rosemary at rosemarylande@gmail.com or Charlotte Salomon, Dir. of Membership, at 925-519-4477 or charlotte@carmelbethisrael.org.

Thank you!



Message From Cantor Alisa

We've entered the Hebrew month of *Adar* in the Jewish calendar when we celebrate the holiday of Purim. The Talmud teaches: "Joy is increased in the month of Adar." In the Zohar, our mystical text, its energy is said to be the "joy of Oneness" and the whole month is called *z'man simkhateinu*, the season of our joy. Despite tragedies and crises that plague our world and impact our personal lives, our teachings instruct us that, at appointed times, we are to make room for joy, lest we focus only on the negative, losing our capacity for seeing beauty and celebrating goodness. We have the capacity to hold many truths at once, and, though not an easy task, it is the skill set and path we must cultivate as human beings. Our sages understood that joy is a powerful tool of survival to help move us forward, especially during difficult times.

On any given Sunday at Hesed Academy, much joy is in the air. This indeed will be increased as we celebrate Purim with our entire community on Sunday morning, March 5. Beginning at 10:30 am in our sanctuary, our congregation will be treated to Purim songs and Megillah blessings, followed by not one, but two Purim shpiels! The first: **"The Purim That Almost Wasn't,"** is written and directed by our very own teen, Ben Lakind (inspired by the play "Noises Off"), and by our madrichim (teacher assistants) and Hesed Academy students. The second: **"Haman, This is Your Life (with apologies to Groucho Marx, Rodney Dangerfield, and Henny Youngman),"** is written and directed by congregants Richard Platt and Lewis Leader! Don't miss this opportunity to kickstart your joy this Purim and support our incredibly talented community!

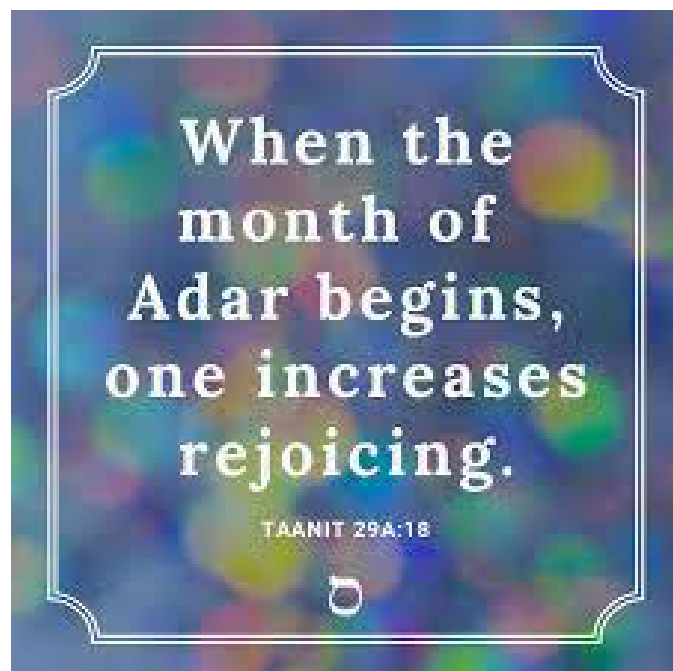
Everyone is invited to come in costume, to make fun of ourselves, and to shatter our set ways of thinking with laughter. And, amidst our fun,

make no mistake—the potent message of Purim is clear: revolt against antisemitism, racism, and all forms of oppression and speak truth to power.

And it would not be Purim without hamantaschen. Food aficionado Larry Solow will lead a community hamantaschen baking session for all so everyone can go home with freshly baked goodies.

There is so much that fills me with joy at CBI, not the least of which is watching our B'nai Mitzvah students become more confident in themselves and motivated to learn their prayers and blessings. Our Shabbatons, well-attended by both parents and students, have been successful in fulfilling our vision of the B'nai Mitzvah journey as a family endeavor. At our last Shabbaton, Bat Mitzvah student Jesse Entin shared her advice and wisdom with her classmates and their parents with poise, generosity, and confidence that took our class to a new level.

With no mention of God in our Purim story, it seems God is hidden, especially when compared to God's supernal power during Passover next month. Where might God be hiding? In the little steps of bravery and courage we take every day to nourish our gifts and qualities, express who we are, celebrate and share our unique identities, and make this world a more inclusive, safer, and richer place for all.





Hesed Academy

March will be an active month for Hesed Academy. We begin with a huge Purim celebration on March 5. That morning will include

hamantaschen cooking, singing, Purim skits, and a pizza lunch! We would love to have our parents join us for the entire morning of activities. Volunteers will be needed to help.

On the remaining Sundays in March, our students will enjoy more music with Cantor Alisa, another art project led by Megan Felthoven, and cooking with specialist Larry Solow.

On Friday, March 10, our youngest students (K/1/2) will enjoy a 5:15 pm potluck Shabbat dinner followed by an early 6:00 pm Shabbat service. On Friday, March 31, our fifth-grade families will enjoy their potluck Shabbat dinner followed by another 6:00 pm service. Please note that we will enjoy 3 services in March starting at 6:00 pm. This is a wonderful opportunity to introduce younger children to our Friday evening services. Join us March 3, 10, and 31 for these family-oriented Shabbat celebrations.

Our third and fourth grade classes and their families will assist with food preparation for the March 5 I-HELP program. These families will prepare foods to be shared with the approximately 20 men who will spend the night at CBI instead of sleeping outside without a roof over their heads.

A special thank you to the parents who regularly volunteer by picking up bagels for our Sunday morning snack. Some parents have assisted with preparing and setting out the morning snack. One thing I have discovered is that our children LOVE cream cheese and drinking apple juice!

Another note of appreciation, this one to Cantor Fineman, who stepped up to oversee Hesed Academy last month while I was away on my Sabbatical. Juggling both her and my Sunday morning responsibilities could not have been easy.

As always, I welcome your calls. Let me know if you have any concerns or questions about what is happening in our classrooms. I am in the office Tuesday-Friday and happy to meet with you in person or talk over the phone. I hope everyone continues to remain healthy during the winter season when colds and flu seem to spread easily. Please keep your students home if they are not feeling well on Sunday mornings.

Thank you for supporting all that we do at Hesed Academy.

Rabbi Bruce Greenbaum
Hesed Academy Director



Continued from page 1

10:30-11:30 am: Congregation, Parents, and Families Join Students in the Sanctuary

- Purim songs and Megillah blessings
- Purim Shpiel 1: "The Purim That Almost Wasn't," written and directed by our madrich, Ben Lakind!
- Purim Shpiel 2: "Haman, This is Your Life (with apologies to Groucho Marx, Rodney Dangerfield, and Henny Youngman)," written by congregants Richard Platt & Lewis Leader!
- Purim costume parade and more Purim Songs!

11:30 am: Pizza Lunch! Be sure to bring socks and packaged snacks for the I-HELP men and place them in the beautiful basket that CBI volunteers will present later that evening.

11:45-12:30: Community Hamantaschen Bake-Off! Learn how to bake hamantaschen from our food aficionado Larry Solow and take home freshly baked hamantaschen!

Chag Purim Sameach!

GOT TALENT

Mark your calendars! CBI's Annual Talent Show returns on Saturday evening, March 18 for a terrific evening of entertainment, food, and fun for the entire family!

Calling all current and aspiring singers, dancers, comics, musicians, and performers of all stripes--let us know if you will join us on CBI's stage--all ages and talents welcome.

And, this year, for the first time, 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place performances will each receive a \$100 Target Gift Card and all participants will be recognized for their participation

For more info and to sign up, contact Bob Fenton at lawbobman@aol.com or 818-645-3972 or Charlotte Salomon, Dir. of Membership Development & Engagement, at charlotte@carmelbethisrael.org or 925-519-4477.



2nd Night Community Seder at CBI

We are delighted to host our congregation's Community Passover Seder once again. It

will be held the second night of Passover, **Thursday, April 6 at 6:00 pm**, in our CBI Social Hall. This delicious dinner and Seder is led by Rabbi Bruce Greenbaum and Cantor Alisa Fineman. Dinner includes a traditional Seder plate, gefilte fish, matzah ball soup, chicken with a mushroom sauce and potatoes, vegetables, and dessert. Vegetarian and kids' meals are also available. We are keeping costs as low as possible: \$55 for adults, \$25 for students and active military, and free for children 12 and under.

Reserve online by visiting the CBI website <https://CarmelBethIsrael.org/passoverseder/> or call the CBI office at 831-624-2015. With only 150 spaces available, we ask that all prepaid reservations be made by March 30.



Lunch with Our Clergy

This month, join Rabbi Greenbaum on **Thursday, March 9 at noon** at Baja Cantina, located about a mile east of CBI. Weather permitting,

we will meet outside where it is easier to hear and hold our discussion. This month, the rabbi will lead a discussion on "Judaism Down Under and Around the Globe." What are Shabbat services like in Sydney and Hobart? How easy or difficult is it to connect with Jews and synagogues in foreign lands? When we travel, what steps should we take to connect with Jewish communities overseas? Come prepared to share your own experiences -- your questions and thoughts are always welcome. Call the CBI office at 831-624-2015 to RSVP. We will order off their regular menu so expect lunch to cost approximately \$18-\$25.



BEST YEARS

Join Cantor Alisa on **Friday, March 31 at Noon** for Bach's Lunch Free Noontime Concert at SANDBOX. **Bring your lunch** and enjoy The Alexander String Quartet as they take a journey through the life of Dmitri Shostakovich by way of his string quartets. The Quartet will present a selection of movements from several of his string quartets and, together with stories and anecdotes, will illustrate the life of this incredible and fascinating artist.

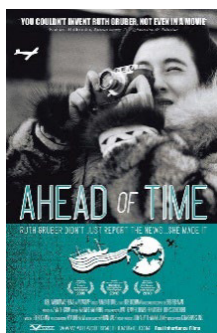
We will meet at SANDBOX in Sand City, 440 Ortiz Ave.
Don't forget your lunch!



Join Us For Community Shabbat Dinner!

Join us for our monthly tradition of community Shabbat dinners, prepared by Malina Breau and her entourage of assistants. Savor a sense of community and food worthy of celebration at **6:15 pm on Friday, March 24.**

Join us as we offer blessings for the bread and wine and sing traditional music to begin our erev Shabbat. Evening services follow at 7:30 pm. Call or email the office for reservations. Cost is \$18 for adults and \$10 for children.



Yom HaShoah Film & Speaker

On **Tuesday, April 18 at 7:00 pm**, in observance of Yom HaShoah, CBI presents "Ahead of Time," an award-winning documentary about the life and times of Ruth Gruber.

Zeva Oelbaum, founder of Reel

Inheritance Films and producer of this film, will join us by Zoom for a Q&A after the film.

For seven decades, foreign correspondent and photojournalist Ruth Gruber didn't just report the news...she made it! Born in 1911 to Russian Jewish immigrants, Gruber reported from the Soviet Arctic, escorted Holocaust refugees on a secret wartime mission, and changed the world with dispatches from the Palestine-bound ship Exodus in 1947. Through her own words and images, the film follows Ruth Gruber's incredible journey as a student, a reporter, an activist leader, and a prolific author. The film captures the drama of her life as she lent her camera lens – and her heart – to refugees of war.



CBI Book Club

Here are our next two dates and book selections:

March 14, 1:30 pm, home of Suellen Rubin. Book -- ONE TWO THREE by Laurie Frankel

April 11, 1:30 pm, home of Karen Wiskoff. Book -- THE PRISON MINYAN by Jonathan Stone



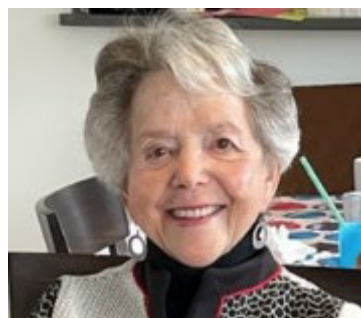
The Lounge at CBI is Open!

Check out the new Members' Lounge at CBI! You will find a free lending library, board games, coffee and tea, and card tables/chairs for organized games (and we're just getting started!). We have installed a message board so that you can post inquiries, activities, and other items of interest to CBI members. If you are waiting at CBI to pick up your kids, drop by the Lounge to meet up with other parents or enjoy some quiet time.

Members can also reserve the Lounge for gatherings of up to 10 people. Consider starting a bridge group, a mahjonn game, a knitting session, a discussion group...This is your space, and we welcome all your ideas!

To reserve The Lounge, call Abby in the CBI office at 831-624-2015.

The refurbished space was made possible by the generosity of CBI members, friends, and family in memory of Diana Greenbaum. The Greenbaum family thanks everyone for enhancing our CBI community.



Todah Rabah- Thank You

Last month CBI received a generous donation from the estate of Diana Greenbaum. This donation to the Greenbaum Youth

Enrichment Fund will support youth programming and camperships for Jewish summer camps. Please follow Diana's example and make sure CBI is included in your estate plans. May Diana Greenbaum's memory always serve as a blessing.



Hesed Academy's Children & Parents Support I-HELP

The I-HELP Social Action Team hosted the January 1 New Year's Dinner for our male guests. Dinner included salmon burgers, baked macaroni, vegetables, and an array of fabulous desserts. We also prepared breakfast and lunch bags. We served 10 men. On January 31, I prepared dinner for seven I-HELP women. We host the women on Monday nights in those months that include a fifth Monday. For all our guests, we put out coffee, drinks, bowls of fruit, cookies, snack bars, bags of nuts, and the like for our guests to take with them.

In February, the 6th & 7th grade parents and children hosted the I-HELP men. The children are completely involved in prepping for the guests. They are energetic and focused and have fun while learning about the issues surrounding homelessness and how we do our small part. The children set the tables and organize the breakfast and lunch bags, diligently filling each with food and drinks. Meanwhile, a few of the children are in the kitchen, shmeasuring bagels and making sandwiches.



Prior to this social action activity, their teachers and members of the CBI's Social Action Team teach the children about the causes of and possible solutions to homelessness in our region. Special thanks to Charlene and Matthew Schuss for leading this discussion and to the teachers, David Awerbuck and Abra Teitler.

When the I-HELP men arrived, we formed our greeting circle. After this, we distributed the Holiday Bags of clothing that the men had requested. How joyful to see their smiles and receive their warm appreciation.

Lorraine and Hugo Gerstl, Carol and Joe Mironov, Matthew and Charlene Schuss, Joe Mello, and Brian Granberry helped with everything. We are grateful for our community's support.

A special thank you to David Sabih and Anna Swartley for their generous contribution to our Social Action Team in honor of Rabbi Bruce.

Arlene Krebs, Social Action Trustee
arlenekrebs123@gmail.com



Saturday, May 13: Cycling Across America--"We Are All In This Together"

CBI is excited to present the award-winning documentary "We Are All In This Together" by

Pacific Grove native Daniel Troia, who will join us for a Q&A after his film. Daniel has spent the last 16 years of his life learning alternative ways to travel the world and connect with people from different cultures and, in the process, to understand that more unites us than separates us. The film movingly embraces human connection and allows us to share some of Daniel's amazing experiences. All proceeds will go to Gathering for Women.



CBI PURIM CELEBRATION

SUNDAY, MARCH 5

9:30 -10:30 am: Hesed Academy Students come in costume and bake hamantaschen

10:30 -11:30 am: Everyone (Students - Families- Congregation) is invited

- Purim songs and Megillah Blessings
- Purim Shpiel 1: "The Purim That Almost Wasn't," written & directed by our madrich, Ben Lakind
- Purim Shpiel 2: "Haman, This is Your Life," written by our congregants Richard Platt & Lewis Leader
- Purim costume parade and more Purim Songs
- Pizza Lunch
- Community Hamantaschen Bake-Off - Learn how to bake hamantaschen from our food aficionado Larry Solow and take home freshly baked hamantaschen!

CHAG PURIM SAMEACH!



Join Rabbi Bruce Greenbaum and
Cantor Alisa Fineman

5783-2023

**Community 2nd Night
Passover Seder
at Congregation Beth Israel**

Thursday, April 6, 6 pm

DINNER MENU

Chicken soup with matzo balls
Gefilte fish
Chicken in Sherry Wine and Mushroom Sauce
Fresh Fruit Cup or Passover Dessert
Traditional Seder Plate on every table
Vegetarian and Kids meal options available

Prepaid RSVP required by March 30

Adults: \$55

Kids 12 and under: free

Students and active military: \$25

RESERVE NOW

Online : www.CarmelBethIsrael.org

Email: ShalomCBI@aol.com

Call: 831-624-2015





Meet the Blatt Family

The Blatt Family began on December 28, 1999. Angelica and I were married on a Carnival Cruise Liner, *The Imagination*. My parents, Norman and Hilda, Angelica's Mother Shirley, Angelica's oldest daughter Natalie, and dear friends joined us

on our honeymoon.

I was born in Cincinnati. Angelica was born in Carmel. We have been members of CBI for 18 years and married for 23 years.

For me, much of my family story lies behind an impenetrable veil. I know this: my mother came from a long line of Lithuanian Jews. My father's family, in the immediate past, originated from Kyiv and Odesa. My paternal grandfather was a Blattstein before he shortened it to Blatt, hoping for a less Semitic trope. My parents were introduced by a cousin who was worried that my father had been single too long. They connected with each other right away. Their love was one of the storybooks, and I became the second of three Blatt children.

Although Cincinnati, Ohio, is the home of Reform Judaism, we belonged to an Orthodox congregation. Orthodox Shul notwithstanding, I was born into an ambivalent Jewish family. Our most outstanding Jewish family credo, to the extent there was one, was "Marry a Jew!"

I became a Bar Mitzvah. I memorized the Musaf Service, my Torah Portion, and my Haftorah Portion from a recording on a cassette tape recorder. I loved the singing, and I loved the music. When I was much younger, I fancied myself a cantor and ran through the halls of my family home singing the Shema with gusto, much to the amusement and teasing of my sisters.

During high school, I became involved in the Zionist Youth Group, Young Judea. I attended a Zionist Youth Summer Camp and decided to go on Hadassah's Year in Israel Program the year after High School.

However, Zionism did not stop the fact that I was on a guided missile path to medical school (my father was a pediatrician) so, after I returned to the States, I was all Pre-med, studied in Chicago, and came to California for medical school. My Judaism waned.

Enter JDate. It was 1997, and I was 38 years old, a psychiatrist, single, and not a practicing Jew, with the "Marry a Jew" precept hanging over my head. After learning about online dating, I went to a photo studio, got the best mug shot possible, and "applied" on

JDate. Not realizing she was on JDate, Angelica responded to my advertisement. She liked the way I looked.

Angelica was raised in Monterey. Her paternal grandparents were Italian immigrants and her mother's family was Scandinavian. Her parents met at Monterey High, and she has two younger brothers. Angelica was raised Christian with a Catholic bent. When she decided that I was husband material, without my realizing it, she divined my "Marry a Jew" mandate and began her conversion to Judaism. Angelica converted at Congregation Beth El in Salinas with Rabbi Bruce Kadin and went to Mikvah in San Francisco.

Locally, my first job was working as a staff psychiatrist at Salinas Valley State Prison, then as a psychiatrist at Natividad Medical Center, and for the last 20 years as a staff psychiatrist at CHOMP. It has been a great blessing to me to have the opportunity to help so many people in our community.

Angelica's professional life on the Monterey Peninsula has been in real estate. She has helped hundreds of people locally buy and sell their homes. She has been a great friend and counselor to all her clients.

Angelica has many friends locally that she grew up with and continues to socialize with. Donny Osmond sang to Angelica and her friends for her 60th birthday year while we were vacationing as a family in Las Vegas.

Angelica is the backbone of our Jewish life. At first, our family belonged to Salinas' Congregation Beth El, and then we found our way to Beth Israel. Most of our Jewish life on the Monterey Peninsula has been centered around the Jewish education of our twins, Claire and Shayna. First with Tot Shabbat (marvelous), then with Sunday School at CBI, then with Bat Mitzvah Studies, and then B'not Mitzvah.

Natalie, Claire, and Shayna are the light of our lives. All three of the girls have been lifers at Santa Catalina school where they had fantastic educations. Natalie works at Google and lives in Los Angeles and Claire and Shayna are 11th graders. Although Claire and Shayna are attending a Catholic school, their attendance there has not interfered with their Jewish identities-- in fact, it may have enhanced it. The twins now have their driver's licenses and are starting to make decisions about their college educations. Claire and Shayna have been Madrichim at Sunday School, and Claire continues to be. Claire is the current Youth Trustee of the CBI Board of Trustees.

Lately, with my family's support, I have been more active in the day-to-day affairs of CBI. Wanting to be a role model for our children and wanting to do something meaningful outside of work, I have become more involved in our CBI community. I joined the CBI Security Committee. I just wanted to see that darn front door locked! Then I found my way to the Board of Trustees and now am somehow the secretary of CBI's Executive Committee (now no one can read the minutes).

And for all of this, I thank my dear wife Angelica.



Congregation Beth Israel

March 2023

Adar-Nisan

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3 6:00 pm Family Erev Shabbat Services with Birthday Blessings also on zoom Traditions	4 10:30 am Shabbat Torah Study with Rabbi Jeff Schulman
5 9:30 am Religious School Purim Celebration & Purim Shpiels (see Shofar for Schedule) 4:00 pm I-HELP Men	6	7	8 4:00 pm Adult Biblical Hebrew	9 12:00 pm Lunch with Clergy-Rabbi Bruce	10 5:15 pm Kinder/1 st /2 nd Shabbat Dinner 6:00 pm Erev Shabbat Services Also on zoom	11 10:30 Shabbat Morning Service when Jesse Entin becomes a Bat Mitzvah
12 9:30 am Religious School 12:30 pm Aleynu	13	14 5:00 pm Worship Committee 6:30 pm CBI Executive Committee Meets	15 4:00 pm Adult Biblical Hebrew	16	17 7:30 pm Erev Shabbat Services also on zoom	18 10:30 am Shabbat Torah Study Also on 7:00 pm Talent Show
19 9:30 am Religious School	20	21 7:00 pm CBI Board of Trustees Meets	22 4:00 pm Adult Biblical Hebrew	23	24 6:15 pm Shabbat Dinner 7:30 pm Erev Shabbat Services also on zoom	25 10:30 am Shabbat Torah Study Also on
26 9:30 am Religious School 12:30 pm Aleynu	27	28	29 4:00 pm Adult Biblical Hebrew	30 Last day for prepaid RSVP for Passover Seder	31 12:00 pm Best Years Bach's Lunch/ Concert 5:15 pm 5 th Grade Shabbat Dinner 6:00 pm Shabbat Services with Anniversary blessings	1 APRIL 10:30 am Shabbat Torah Study Also on

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Laura Arnow	1
Robert Feller	1
Michael Goldman	1
Corrina Joan Rucka	1
Eiram Kelton	2
Richard Gerber	4
Linda Sweet	4
Dan Weiner	4
Stanton Schiffer	5
Ethan Schmidt	5
Eby Wold	5
Toni Lakind	7
Eugene Ganeles	9
Nancy Rund	9
Channaorah Meir	10
Peter Singer	10
Dennis Bates	11
Martin Wiskoff	12
Gadi Maier	14
Deanna Adolph	15
Ruby Browning	16
Bobbie Ehrenpreis	17
Sheree Goldman	17
Cara Lieb	17
Ellen Weiner	17
James Gabbe	18
Diana Rosenthal	18
Devorah Waxer	18
Jonny Goldberg	21
Wendy Rosenthal	22
Alan Goldman	23
Ronald Kohen	23
Karen Paull	24
David Epel	26
Donna Shore	26
Michael Dicus	27
Aline Harris	27
Elaine Gallup Conner	28
Ann Packer	28
Ari Entin	31
Benjamin Lakind	31

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

David Awerbuck & Astrid Holberg	5
Peter & Deborah Stern	6
Lewis & Sandra Leader	8
Robert Moskowitz & Jeannette Stern	13
Susan & Richard Platt	14

Family News



We are blessed to welcome our granddaughter Ariella Simcha, joining Ben and Hava and Eliyah Shimon Waxer, in Ashkelon, Israel. May she continue to bring joy and light to all of our world! Michael and Devorah Waxer.



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TODAH RABAH!

Thank you to those who have recently
given generously to
Congregation Beth Israel

Building & Grounds Fund

Deanna Adolph: in memory of Al Adolph
Harlan & Elizabeth Grogin: in memory of
Diana Greenbaum
Cele Passin: in memory of Diana
Greenbaum

Rachael Sammet Music Fund

Matthew Schuss & Charlene Webber-
Schuss: in honor of Cantor Alisa Fineman

Greenbaum Youth Enrichment Fund

Diana Greenbaum of blessed memory

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Rhonda & Jerry Brown: in memory of Diana
Greenbaum

Jewish Food Festival

Bill Pardue & Barbara Mitchell: in honor of
River Gurtin's Birthday

General Donations

From the family of Ava Malin for her Bat
Mitzvah
The Rogel Family: in memory of Diana
Greenbaum
United Way donation
Alisa Fineman & Kimball Hurd: in honor of
Rabbi Jeff Schulman for all he does
Alisa Fineman & Kimball Hurd: in honor of
Rabbi Leah Novick's 91st birthday
Alisa Fineman & Kimball Hurd: in memory
of Ann Kaufman, beloved mother of Louise
Alisa Fineman & Kimball Hurd: in memory
of David Ehrenpreis
Ellyn Gelson: February Birthdays &
Anniversaries
Melvin F. & Susan N. Gorelick: in memory
of Max Frons
Steven River Gurtin: in memory of Milton
Gurtin
Aline Harris: in memory of Jack Harris
Thomas & Ellen G. Krause: in memory of
Ellen's father, Harry Ruja
Cele Passin: in memory of David
Ehrenpreis
Michael & Devorah Waxer



“Hello Muddah, Hello Faddah”—CBI Kids Receive Camperships!

Thanks to the generosity of the
Charles and Kerry Beren Youth Education Foundation,
the Eitan Biblarz Campership Fund, and the Greenbaum
Youth Enrichment Fund, Cong. Beth Israel was able to
award \$23,850 in camp scholarships this year, assisting
every family that applied. This coming summer, we are
delighted to announce that 11 CBI campers will attend
Camp Newman and Camp Massad.



Thank You to Our Oneg Hosts for the Month of February

**February 3rd – Students & Families of our 3/4 grades
and the Lyons family in honor of Shifra becoming a Bat
Mitzvah**

**February 10th – Sandra Leader in loving memory of
her father and mother**

**February 24th – Abra Teitler in loving memory of her
brother Neal**

**If you would like to host during the month of March,
please call the CBI office for available dates.**

Please help us continue this wonderful tradition as a
part of our Erev Shabbat Services. Sign up to host!

You may host in honor or memory of someone special
to you or in gratitude or honor of a special occasion or
life cycle event. It's easy, it's fun, and it's very much
appreciated. Call the CBI office to schedule your Oneg
at 831-624-2015 or call Lois Epel at 831-277-0083.

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Torah Connections:

Vol. 178 March 2023, 5783

By Michael L. Waxer

The First Two

Our Sages teach us that two of the 613 total commandments were given to **all of the Jewish people directly by God, HaShem**. This is also reflected in the word '**Torah**', since the gematria of 'torah', i.e. the numerical value of its letters, is 611. When the two additional ones that were given to us directly are added to that, we get the full 613.

So, what are these 2 commandments, these that are different from all the others?

Here is the first, also known as the 1st commandment:

"I am HaShem, your God, Who has taken you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery. There shall not be unto you the gods of others in My Presence." (Exodus [Shemot] 20: 2-3)

One of the most interesting things about this is that God is talking to us in the *first person*. Then, God references the freedom from slavery in Egypt, God's direct interaction on our behalf. The 10 plagues that were just witnessed served several purposes, one of which was to free the enslaved Israelites.

From a larger perspective the world was witnessing the destruction of the Egyptian **god system**, starting with their god of the Nile, and progressing thru their god of the Sun, **Ra**. It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word for '**evil**' also happens to be '**ra**'.

The second of these unique statements is the very next, 2nd commandment:

"You shall not make for yourself a statue, nor any image of that which is in the heavens above, or that which is on the earth below, or that which is in the water beneath the earth; you shall not prostrate yourself to them nor shall you worship them, for I am HaShem, your God," (Exodus [Shemot] 20: 4-6)

Clearly HaShem demonstrates that **false gods are not acceptable**, and the Exodus demonstrated God's powers to show how each of the Egyptian 'gods' were inept, completely unable to affect the will of HaShem. In general terms, in our modern times, there seems to be little worshipping of the sun, a river, or a tree. But are there false gods that are pervasive in our time?

Like many things that may be worshipped, perhaps inadvertently, we may not be aware that we have actually

joined a belief system of sorts. What are the attributes of a new cult, a new false god? What should we be on the lookout for, so we don't fall into this trap?

Religions give us a world view, and we are witnessing a new world view, which explains why the rains come or don't come, or why there is a hot day or a cold day. Discussion and dialogue is not allowed, information not in line with the narrative is considered "misinformation", including scientifically valid data. Social and overt economic pressure forces compliance, and the growing movements are now indoctrinated in our schools, our governments, and spreading through the United Nations.

Another attribute of a religion is to have some type of 'end of times' scenario, and this new religion has this aspect as well, calling for drastic change in ourselves, and in our communities. **Fear is the tool** used to drive compliance and maintain control. People, including scientists and leaders who speak out are labelled 'non-believers' or 'deniers'.

There are leaders amongst the new "religion" who fill rooms with faithful followers. We are told that we must suffer now so we do not suffer as much later. The narrative is vital to be able to extend power and control over people. Many people have become disciples and can recite with passion the basic doctrines of the faith, **often without awareness of having joined**.

This may have been the genius of the 1st and 2nd commandments (of the 10 commandments) which **HaShem spoke directly to each of us**, in the first person - recognizing HaShem as the creator of everything, who gave to us a singular definition of good and evil. If we stay true to this knowledge, **we have the tools to be able to discern right from wrong**. More pointedly, we should be able to discern when an idea starts to become a cult, or when a narrative is being created to maintain a darker motivation.

In our modern times we are deluged with information. Yet even though there is constant data, we don't have an easy way to determine fact from fiction. We must rely on something deeper... perhaps **our faith in HaShem**, and **the wisdom of our heritage**, as guides that can help us figure it all out.

May we all be blessed in our efforts to dig deeper **into our faith**, so we can more easily discern truth, and avoid false ideas, false cults, and false gods.

This Torah Connection recognizes Rav Frankenthal of Kochav Yaakov in Israel but this column is the sole responsibility of the author and specifically does NOT reflect the positions of the Board of Trustees of CBI, CBI, its membership, Reform Judaism, or Judaism. Please send any comments to the author at: mlwaxer@sbcglobal.net.

DANIEL S. ROBBINS, Ph.D.
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

26384 CARMEL RANCHO LANE, SUITE 203E
CARMEL, CALIFORNIA 93923

(831) 626-6600

CAL. LIC. PSY6557



ANGELICA BLATT

Carmel Rancho
126 Clock Tower Pl., Ste. 100
Carmel, CA 93923
831-206-8070
angelicablatt@gmail.com
CalRE #01248430

COLDWELL BANKER REALTY



Bobbie Ehrenpreis
Carmel Realty Company
(831) 624-1861
(831) 915-8010

bobbie@carmel-realty.com

Monica Browning, MA

REALTOR® | DRE#02014580
831.601.9038
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San Carlos 4 North West of 6th Ave.
Cottage Row #9, Serena Court
831-625-4CPA Fax 831-625-4273
Nancy@cpabythesea.com



Congregation Beth Israel
5716 Carmel Valley Road
Carmel, CA 93923
831- 624-2015

email: shalomcbi@aol.com

Website: www.carmelbethisrael.org



Congregation Beth Israel
 5716 Carmel Valley Road
 Carmel, CA 93923

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Chartered in 1954 as the Jewish Community of the Monterey Peninsula, Congregation Beth Israel today serves the spiritual, educational, and social needs of Jews on the Peninsula. We derive programming and administrative strength from our affiliation with the Union for Reform Judaism and offer traditional programming to meet the needs of Jews on the Monterey Peninsula. The Congregation sponsors weekly worship services and Torah study on Shabbat; observances of all holidays and festivals; and formal educational programs. We operate our own school on weekend mornings and we also maintain a Judaic library.

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Parshiot

March 4, Tetzaveh

T: Exodus 27:20-30:10

H: Ezekiel 43:10-2

March 11, Ki Tisa

T: Exodus 30:11-34:35

H: I Kings 18:1-3

March 18,

Vayakhel/Pekude

T: Exodus 35:1-40:38

H: I Kings 7:40-8:21

March 25, Vayikra

T: Leviticus 1:1-5:26

H: Isaiah 43:21-44:23