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**Deadline  
for next  
issue  
October 15**

#### NOTE to Contributors

Please let Andrea Goodman know if you have a flyer to insert before you format it in Word. It might work better with our new format to give Andrea your text and artwork and let her do the formatting.



### From the President Greg Weiner

First, some exciting news: Congregation Beth Israel has hired an

Executive Director who will start part-time on September 5 and full-time on September 18. Brian Palaia has an extensive record of finance and administrative expertise. He has served as a town manager and town administrator for several municipalities in New England. A graduate of the University of Connecticut and Salve Regina University, Brian developed a particular interest in religious studies as an undergraduate and applied for this position in search of a path that would provide opportunities for meaning, much like his public service did.

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As we approach the Days of Awe, I'm struck, as I always have been, by the description of Rosh Hashanah as *Yom Hazikaron*, the Day of Remembrance. For Jews, remembering isn't something that happens after we forget, like losing your car keys and then remembering where you put them. Remembrance is an active obligation. In Exodus, God "remembers" the suffering of the Jewish people. But is that because God forgot or because God made a point of remembering in order not to forget? I'll leave that one to wiser minds than mine. But it's a nice way to think about the remembering

*President's Message continued on page 1*



### From the Rabbi Aviva Fellman

I have notoriously big and wide feet which make shoe

shopping something I outright dread. With the "invention" of online shopping, it has gotten slightly less daunting, but it is still not fun. I recently went through 6 sets of online orders and returns only to still not find summer sandals that were comfortable on my feet.

While I would be inclined to call the ordering and returns an inconvenience, the Rabbis of the Talmud would call it suffering...and a blessing. According to the Rabbis of the Talmud, some level of suffering is not only a normal part of life but also an important part of living. In fact, they even ask and then discuss what is considered the minimum threshold of what can be called suffering.

The question is asked, "Until where is the minimum limit of suffering? What is the least amount of pain that is included in the definition of suffering?"

According to the Rabbis engaged in the discussion, ordering an outfit or pair of shoes online and it not fitting right when it arrives, ordering a hot latte and getting an iced one in the Dunkin drive thru,

*Rabbi's Message continued on page 4*

## Upcoming Events September and October

**Sept 4** Office closed Labor Day

**Sept 9** Selichot

**Sept 9** Popsicle playground meetup 4 pm

**Sept 15** Erev Rosh Hashana

**Sept 16 – 17** Rosh Hashana Days 1 & 2

**Sept 24** Erev Yom Kippur

**Sept 25** Yom Kippur

**Sept 29** Erev Sukkot

**Sept 30 – Oct 1** Sukkot Days 1 & 2

**Sept 30** Potential Sukkot Hop

**Oct 3 – Oct 5** Chol Hamoed

**Oct 7** Shemini Atzeret

**Oct 8** Simchat Torah

**Oct 9** Office closed Indigenous  
People's Day

**Oct 22** BI@100 Jewish Cooking Se-  
ries, Part 1 Ashkenazi Cooking

**November 4** Torahthon

*President's message continued from Page 1*

we're doing in this 100th anniversary year. And it's an opportunity to ask: When, God willing, future congregants make an effort to remember us, what will they say—and what foundation will we have built for them to continue building upon themselves? Those are the kinds of questions our lay leaders are asking during what we hope will be a fruitful, and participatory, strategic planning process. By the time you get this, the Board will have already had a retreat to discuss how the process will take shape. If you have ideas, please share them.

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One thing I need to remember

right now, and it's one of the many things that makes BI unique: Unsung volunteers do so much of the work of the Congregation. Every event, every service, every kiddish—everything that happens here, large or small—reflects unseen hours, often months, of partnership between volunteers and our professional leaders. If you see volunteers, please thank them. If you can help, please offer. If you interact with security volunteers over the holidays implementing safety protocols—some of which may seem inconvenient but all of which reflect careful planning and expert advice—please thank them too. We're in this together.



November is Jewish Book Month and Sisterhood is celebrating with a weekday visit to the Yiddish Book Center the first week in November. Details are still being worked out. If you are interested in going, please contact Andrea Daroff (774-243-6613 or [andrea.daroff@charter.net](mailto:andrea.daroff@charter.net)).

## Looking for Lost Library Books

Over the past eight months, the BI Library has reorganized with the goal of making it easy to find particular subjects or authors and/or books aimed at the appropriate level, and getting the collection up to date so that it meets the needs of the congregation.

Please check around and see if you have any BI Library books at home, and

if so, please return them to the library at your earliest convenience.

Interested in donating books? Please email Barbara Smith-Mandell

([library@bethisraelworc.org](mailto:library@bethisraelworc.org)) with information on what you want to donate so we can determine whether they are appropriate for the collection.

# Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Beth Israel!



We are excited to be approaching 5784, our centennial anniversary year, with special events and gatherings throughout this coming year. We hope this year of programming will be energizing and satisfying spiritually and educationally for our community. This is information on our first two events of the year.

After the High Holiday season, the kick-off event for our anniversary year will be the first session of our three-part cooking program, *Beyond Bagels: Jewish Cooking Worldwide*, presented by master chef Carol Goodman Kaufman. This culinary series will include recipes and instruction highlighting Ashkenazi, Sephardic, and Mizrahi cooking.

In our first “Beyond Bagels” workshop on October 22nd, we will cook something not usually seen on the list of “Top Ten Ashkenazi Foods,” but I think you will discover a new must-have. Found in almost every Eastern European culture by various names, *shlishkes* are dumplings made with ricied or grated boiled potatoes. While similar to Italian *gnocchi*, the Hungar-

ian-Jewish version we will prepare is typically rolled with bread crumbs that have been toasted in butter or *schmaltz* with onion.

We will be providing ingredients to in-person attendees so they can have a hands-on cooking (and eating) experience. People will also be able to join on Zoom and use their own ingredients listed on the recipe that will be sent to them.

Expanding on the Askenazi culture theme, our second anniversary event on November 4th is a rousing program featuring Klezmer music and storytelling. Our program will include traditional tunes, as well as more modern interpretations of Klezmer music. The program will be dedicated in memory of Irving White, a long-time BI congregant and supporter.

Spearheaded by The Jack Soref Klezmer Quartet, the program will feature special guest violinist Rebecca Mac. Rebecca has been interested in Klezmer music “since a Klezmer band stole the show at her bat-mitzvah.” She has studied and performed Klezmer music with some of the best-known

Klezmer musicians in the United States and Eastern Europe, the founding place of Klezmer music.

We are delighted that this musical program will be the centerpiece for this year’s Jewish Federation Torathon: *The Wonderful World of Jewish Music*. In addition to the Klezmer Quartet’s opening program, workshops will be offered by educators, clergy, and musicians celebrating the richness of Jewish musical traditions.

The entire Torathon program this year is in celebration of the 100th anniversary of Congregation Beth Israel, and is made possible through the collaboration and partnership of Beth Israel and Jewish Federation of Central MA.

What an inspiring anniversary year this is going to be, with numerous other enjoyable programs and activities. We can’t wait to get started!

Paula Sommer, Nancy Spitulnik, and Barbara Smith-Mandell Co-chairs

## From our VP of Finance Andrea Goodman Looking forward to another 100 years



As VP of Finance, it is my job to keep the shul in business. To me this comes down to two things you

can do to help the synagogue:

- Pay as much of your dues as you can
- Be kind to all of us volunteers.

### **Paying Dues is Very Important**

If you want the shul to be here, we simply have to stay in business, which

means we need to take in more money than we spend.

A great many of our congregants have abatements. We don’t question you if you tell us you need help. All we ask is that you re-evaluate every year whether you can afford to pay more.

Some congregants say, “I rarely come, so why should I pay so much dues, or the technology fee or the security fee?” It’s very simple. If you want the shul to be here, to be able to afford a Rabbi to visit you in the hospital, to

be here when you need something, like a wedding or a funeral, to be able to come to services online when you’re bedridden, we need the money to stay in business. Just because you don’t need all the services we offer today doesn’t mean you won’t want them in the future.

### **Be Kind to Our Volunteers**

Our volunteers don’t get paid, and there are a great many that work behind the scenes that you don’t

*Finance continued on page 6*

Hello all and greetings from the Beth Israel facility department, it's been a few years since I've written in the BI@Home, so let me catch everyone up with what's been going on in our building the past few years.

As many of you have noticed, we have renovated our chapel and library. The pews from the chapel were removed, the walls and ceiling painted, carpeting was replaced, and beautiful new shades were installed. Tech was also improved. The library was thoroughly reorganized by Barbara Smith-Mandell with all books being removed and cataloged. The walls, books shelves and ceiling were also painted.

2022-23 was a successful heating season for our facility with no unannounced heating outages during the year. We have had outages in the past due to issues with Biofuel delivered by

our old oil company without notifying anyone. This fuel wreaked havoc on our heating systems for years. Causing shut-downs, clogged filters and fuel pump losses. After cleaning out the on-site oil tank and after numerous maintenance procedures we appear to once again have our systems running properly.

Green initiatives have also been implemented for our weekly Kiddushes. As you may have noticed we now use reusable plates, cutlery and cups and have been composting for quite some time now. Thanks to Bunny Callahan for all her help.

Recently we have continued the task of removing unnecessary items from the building including a much-needed cleanout of the second floor. We have also finally cleaned out under the stage by removing the old blue folding chairs. Thanks to Beth Cyr for putting the

chairs on Facebook Marketplace. Our old unwanted chairs were donated to Churches and organizations in the area and will be put to good use.

As the High Holiday's grow closer we have begun preparing Beth Israel for this special time of year with improvements being made to our landscaping as well as reconfiguring our sanctuary to prepare for our congregation and getting our large sukkah ready to go. I look forward to seeing many of you during the Holidays.

As always, If you have any questions or concerns about our facility here at Beth Israel please feel free to send me a email: (scott.otoole@bethisraelworc.org) or call/text at 774-502-0335.

Thank You,  
Scott O'Toole

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### *Rabbi's Message continued from page 1*

or even someone who left the house looking like a toddler who dressed themselves, would qualify as suffering. Ok, in their day it wasn't online, at the drive thru, or even related to looking like a clown.

"R' Elazar says: Anyone who had a garment woven for him to wear, and it does not fit him. R. Zeira, and some say R' Shmuel b. Nahmani objected to this: Even more than that they said! Even if he intended to mix his wine with hot water, and it was mixed for him with cold, or with cold, and it was mixed for him with hot.

And you say all this?! Mar, the son of Ravina said: even if his shirt was turned backwards." (BT Arakhin 16b-17a)

The Rabbis put the notion of inconvenience and suffering together and conclude this particular discussion by saying "Anyone for

whom forty days passes without suffering has "received their world." They are suggesting that anyone who goes 40 days without being inconvenienced in some way has preemptively redeemed their reward for the world to come. In other words, it is nearly impossible that in living, you will not experience some level of inconvenience- even if it is only needing to drive to the UPS store a mile away to process the returns for the too-small shoes that arrived directly to your door.

We all have small disappointments and "sufferings" in our lives. Some are surprising and some are disappointing, but all are meant to give us some level of reassurance that everything will be ok. These very personal moments and feelings can serve as spiritual connectors. According to the Rabbis, these hard or challenging moments can also

be spiritually valuable as they are what keep us on our toes, looking to the support of others, humble us in our own sense of privilege, and even keep our prayers from getting rote.

How will the High Holy Days humble you this year? Maybe it's having to find new shoes. Maybe it is the suffering of having a forever-favorite sanctuary tune changing this year. Maybe it is adjusting to a new food or person at our table. Maybe it is choosing to mask when we had gotten used to not needing to anymore. No one should suffer but I hope that those moments of discomfort can bring a twinge of a smile too. As the sages said, this too is a good thing. I hope that our services and High Holy Day experience will be uplifting and spiritually challenging- in a blessed way. I'm excited to be comfortably uncomfortable with you.



## ***We are excited to welcome back our past 2019-20 Young Emisary, DOLEV STAV as our CENTRAL MA SHALIACH this year!***



Dolev and his family live on Kibbutz Beit Hashita in our Partnership region of Gilboa,

Israel. His Dad's side of the family is from Eastern Europe, and his Mom's side is from Yemen and Iran. When he was 2 years old his family moved to New Orleans, Louisiana, for 3 years, because of his Dad's job. In high school, Dolev majored in theater and psychology and he danced 4 times a week. His first Shlichut was here, in Central MA 2019-2020. He then returned to Israel and served in the IDF and completed his service this past May.

Ever since he was a little kid, he loved learning about Israel and Judaism, and had a lot of interest in how the Jewish customs are throughout the world.

He strongly believes in making connections. "I have always been interested in Jewish communities all over the world, and I think that it is important to expand our horizons and learn about our culture."

Dolev, 22, will arrive in Central MA in late August and stay a full year. As Shaliach, he will live in his own apartment, as opposed to living with host families as he did as a young emissary a few years ago.

Dolev will work at BI and our synagogues throughout Central MA and their religious schools, Clark Hillel and on projects with the Jewish Federation of Central MA, which sponsors the Shaliach program.

"We are so excited to welcome post army Shlichot into our community," said Steven Schimmel, Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of Central MA. "There are tremendous opportunities to continue to enrich and strengthen our connection to Israel, and I have been working closely with

our Shaliach Coordinator Liz Baker to ensure a successful Shaliach program. A Shaliach will undoubtedly enable us to develop deeper and more meaningful connections, especially as our community returns to normalcy from the pandemic."

One of Dolev's goals has been to return to the U.S. as a Shaliach. He has gone through extensive training at the Jewish Agency's Shlichut Institute to prepare. He attributes his interest in being a Shaliach to his love of education. Dolev said his previous year in Worcester and the relationships he forged will be an advantage in his work as a Shaliach.

There are currently Shlichim in Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Westport CT.

For more information or to help welcome Dolev when he arrives in late August, please contact: Liz Baker, Shaliach Supervisor, at [lizkbaker58@gmail.com](mailto:lizkbaker58@gmail.com)

## ***Social Action***

Hope everyone enjoyed the summer, even if it was soggy at times. Now to gear up for the new year. We are kicking things off with -

### **HIGH HOLIDAY FOOD DRIVE – Sept 10 – Sept 29**

Starting 5784 off right. We will be holding our annual food drive to benefit our hungry neighbors. We need unopened, unbreakable, shelf stable food items. Think canned soup, stew, pasta, cereal, beans. When you shop for your holiday feasts, drop in a few items for those less fortunate than yourself. All food will be picked up by Rachel's Table and taken to local food pantries.

Shelter meals are back. Share your favorite casserole, chop a salad, buy cookies. We organize a home-cooked meal for a shelter and deliver your contributions. Just cook or buy a part of a meal and deliver it to Bunny Callahan's front porch. It does not need to be kosher. We will take it to a shelter. If you would like to cook in the BI kitchen, let Bunny know and we will make a date. To participate contact Michelle Cochran at [weefishe@charter.net](mailto:weefishe@charter.net). Sign up for as many as you wish. Beginning dates are Oct 8 & 22, Nov 5.



Our medical advisory group has met to discuss Covid safety at Beth Israel during our High Holiday services.

Please see below for a summary of our plans.

Covid-19 is no longer a “pandemic” - it is endemic worldwide, meaning that the virus is always present in the population, with rising and falling case levels, caused by the emergence of new virus variants and other factors. So - we all need to learn to live with this virus because it is not going away anytime soon. Fortunately, here in the US we are seeing far fewer deaths and serious illnesses than earlier. Experts believe this is because of the combination of immunity from immunization, and immunity acquired from infection with past strains of the virus. Nonetheless, Covid-19 remains in the top 10 leading causes of death in the US. Long Covid, a debilitating illness with persisting weakness and other serious symptoms has also become less common with immunization, but remains a concern. As I write this (mid-August), there has been a very significant increase in Covid-19 cases in MA and nationally over the past weeks, as well as a 15% increase in hospitalizations for Covid-19, and a 10% increase in deaths compared to the low-point in July.

## High Holiday COVID Policy

What can you do to protect yourself against Covid, especially now that cases are again rising? Most important is immunization. Covid-19 immunizations are SAFE and very effective at reducing your own risk of serious illness and death, BUT they ALSO help protect your family, friends, and our BI community by reducing the likelihood that you will spread infection. We all must help each other. A new booster vaccine offering additional protection against the currently circulating Omicron strains will be released this fall. Get it when it becomes available, and if you have not had at least 3 Covid vaccines, get one NOW. If you do get Covid and are over age 50, or have other risk factors for serious disease, call your doctor to get a prescription for Paxlovid, a drug that reduces the risk of dying by more than 80%, and also reduces the risk of getting long Covid. Wearing a well-fitting mask (N-95/KN-95 or KF-94) when you are in crowded spaces like public transportation again seems prudent, especially when infections are rising.

At BI for the high holidays, we will remain mask-optional but we strongly recommend wearing a mask during services to protect yourself and others. Although we will do our best to space seating and provide good ventilation, there are simply many more people in the sanctuary on the holidays than there are on a regular shabbat, and this

increases risk of infection. Singing aerosolizes virus, but a mask protects you and others. We will again offer a mask-required section, for those who wish to sit with others wearing masks. Please DO make sure your immunizations are up-to-date. We will not be requiring proof of immunization this year, but we very strongly recommend immunization against Covid-19. Finally, if you are not feeling well, please do not come to services. Even a negative rapid test does not rule out infection if you have symptoms! If you have had a known Covid exposure in the week before you plan to attend, please test with a rapid test before you come, and if you test negative, you may come but you must wear a mask. Of course, if you test positive, don't come, but do call your doctor for guidance.

To summarize:

- We strongly recommend wearing a mask during services, but masks are not required.
- -There will be a mask-required seating area in the sanctuary
- -We strongly recommend immunization against Covid-19, but immunization proof is not required.
- -If you do not feel well (cold symptoms or fever), DO NOT COME to services

On behalf of our BI medical advisory group, wishing all of you a *healthy*, happy High Holiday period and New Year 5784!

Jeremy Golding, MD, FFAFP

*VP Finance continued from page 3*

even know about. We NEED these people because we can't afford to hire people to do all these jobs. I'm not going to mention anyone because I'll miss someone, but some of our teams that work behind the scenes are technology, finance, security, and facilities. These people work tirelessly to keep

us running.

For example, I know that some people get annoyed with the monthly emails reminding you of what you still owe in dues. This is my policy to try to get the money we need. It's no different than getting a monthly bill for your credit card or phone bill.

*If you can't afford to pay, let us know, and we'll help you.* If you can pay, then pay! Don't get aggravated. I'm just doing the best job I can to keep the shul in business (and losing billable hours in the process).

Have a happy new year! And let's hope we have 100 more happy new years!

# *A message from the BI Security Team in advance of the Days of Awe*

As we approach the joyous and sacred High Holidays, we would like to share some important updates and preparations for this special time of year, we want to ensure that our congregation gathers in an environment that prioritizes safety and security. The well-being of our community is of utmost importance and we are dedicated to ensuring a safe and meaningful experience for all our congregants and guests. Here's what you need to know:

## **1. Enhanced Security Measures:**

First to be clear there is no known threat or rise in risk threat reporting. These updates are part of our safety measures and protocols which we regularly review especially in conjunction with our calendar cycle events. In collaboration with local law enforcement agencies and security experts, we have reviewed and strengthened our security protocols. There will be an increased security presence during all High Holiday services, including uniformed personnel and security personnel equipped to respond swiftly to any potential concerns.

## **2. Entrance Update**

This year, for security and safety reasons, we continue to maintain our risk reducing entrance procedures. There will be no entry through the front doors of the synagogue. Instead, we kindly ask all attendees to enter and check in through the chapel entrance in the rear of the building. We understand this may be less than comfortable and convenient. We believe this adjustment, however, contributes to a more secure and smooth flow of traffic during this busy season. We will allow exit through the front doors, but no re-entry.

## **3. Parking and Handicapped Parking**

To better accommodate all members of our community, we have arranged for additional handicapped

parking spaces near the chapel entrance. Please respect these spaces and ensure they are available for those who truly need them. We understand that as parking fills in the chapel lot, it will mean that congregants and guests will be parking in the east and north lots (by Notre Dame) and the west lot (behind Summit Academy) - we thank you in advance for making the long walk to the chapel door.

## **4. Security Team Training**

Your safety is our priority. We have organized two important training sessions for our dedicated volunteer security team to ensure a secure environment during the High Holidays - to which all are invited they would like. The training will cover essential topics such as run, hide, fight strategies and techniques for handling potential threats. It will also focus on how to welcome guests, assess threat levels and effectively de-escalate any tense situations. These sessions will take place on Thursday, August 17th at 7:30pm and Sunday, August 20th at 9:00am. Your commitment to the safety of our congregation is deeply appreciated.

## **5. Congregation Emergency Response Training**

Preparedness extends to our entire congregation. We encourage all members to participate in an emergency response training session on Saturday, August 26th, following shabbat service and Adon Olam. This training will provide valuable information on how to respond to different emergency scenarios and ensure the well-being of everyone in our community. This training is critical in order to help all understand steps to take in the unlikely event of an emergency. Whether you are able to attend or not please make sure to familiarize yourself with the exits and evacuation routes within the synagogue. Our ushers and security

personnel will be available to assist you with any questions.

## **6. Reporting Suspicious Activity**

As always if you see something, say something. If you notice any suspicious activity or behavior during the High Holiday services or at anytime, please do not hesitate to notify a member of our security team or a synagogue staff member. Your vigilance and cooperation play a vital role in maintaining a secure environment for all.

## **7. COVID Protocols**

Please review the postings from the Health Advisory committee. The team is staying abreast of the latest data in developing procedures for keeping us healthy and safe as well, while accommodating our practices for worship and coming together as a community.

We understand that these measures might cause some inconvenience, but your safety is our top priority. As we come together to observe the High Holidays, we appreciate your cooperation and understanding as we strive to create a secure and meaningful environment for all worshippers during this important time of year. Amidst these challenging times by staying informed, respecting our protocols, and working together we demonstrate our commitment to each other's well-being.

May the upcoming High Holidays be a time of reflection, renewal, and unity for us all. We look forward to joining in worship and celebration with you.

Wishing you and your loved ones a joyful New Year.

L'Shanah Tovah Tikatevu, The Safety and Security Committee Please feel free to reach out with any questions to Denise Forbes, Marc Cohen or Dan Shertzer

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Dan Shertzer (he, him)  
508-332-2615

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