



Beth El Bulletin

February 2018
Shevat/Adar 5778

Beth El Hebrew Congregation

*"For my house shall be a house
of prayer for all people."
Isaiah 56:5*

February is Jewish Disability Awareness & Inclusion Month

Join us to celebrate the 10th anniversary of JDAIM, a unified initiative to raise disability awareness and foster inclusion in Jewish communities worldwide.

Disability Awareness and Inclusion Shabbat Service - February 9, 7:30 pm
Soul Shabbat led by the Religious Schools 6th grade class with featured guest, Best Buddies Advisory Board member Lauren Eden.
Topic: Tikkun Olam and the Power of Inclusion

ReelAbilities Film Festival Preview Event - February 25, 4:00 pm
"The Finishers" (See flier with details)



Worship Services

Friday, February 2
Erev Shabbat Service
7:30 pm

Saturday, February 3
Shabbat Morning Service
10:30 am

Friday, February 9
Erev Shabbat Service/
Disability and Soul
Shabbat with Sixth Grade
7:30 pm

Saturday, February 10
Shabbat Morning Service
10:30 am
Tot Shabbat 11 am

Friday, February 16
Erev Shabbat Service
7:30 pm

Saturday, February 17
Shabbat Morning Service
and Bat Mitzvah of
Samara Tanner, daughter
of Shoshanna and
Michael Tanner,
10:30 am

Friday, February 23
Erev Shabbat Service
7:30 pm

Saturday, February 24
Shabbat Morning Service
10:30 am
Purim Tot Shabbat, 11 am

Ross Scholarship Nomination Period Opens, see page 8

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Rabbi's Remarks

WHILE TECHNICALLY still on sabbatical, I felt bad about not having a column in last month's Bulletin and so I am editing and updating one that I wrote in 2012. The festival of Tu B'Shvat, which has become our Jewish Arbor Day celebration, is particularly relevant in this time of accelerating climate change and its disastrous consequences, which are becoming more and more evident as the years pass. Judaism has always had an intimate, close connection to nature and our tradition frequently urges us to be aware of the implications of our actions, both in the short and long-term.

While it is a fact that climate change has occurred throughout history, the effect that humanity has had on accelerating that change is unprecedented and undeniable. We ignore our contribution to this change at our peril!

The minor festival of Tu B'Shvat is a reminder of our responsibility for the welfare of our natural world. It originates in the Mishna, where it is designated as the tax year for trees. Strictly speaking it is the date which distinguishes last year's crop from this year's. According to one Rabbinic explanation, the winter rains end around this time so that one can be reasonably confident that the blossoms that are about to bloom received their sustenance from this year's rains rather than the past year's rains.

Around the 13th Century, Tu B'Shvat acquired elevated status and became a semi-festival, with its attendant prohibitions of reciting parts of the liturgy and a curtailing of mourning practices. In the Ashkenazi world it became the custom to consume 15 different fruits, particularly those grown in the land of Israel. Sephardic custom, influenced by the Kabbalists of Tsfat, introduced a more elaborate celebration which included a night of study and prayer, interrupted by the consumption of various fruits. This eventually evolved into a full seder, including a succession of fruits and the drinking of four cups of wine, ranging from white to red.

In modernity the trend has been to celebrate Tu B'Shvat as a kind of Arbor Day on which trees are planted, even though this has nothing to do with its historical origins. It does, however, make for a great JNF promotion and so has been widely adopted by congregations throughout the world. What in fact seems to be happening is that over the centuries each community has taken this holiday and, instead of dismissing it as now being irrelevant, has molded it into a celebration that is both meaningful and enjoyable for that generation.

We are in many ways trying to do the same thing today. Tu B'Shvat gives us the opportunity to reflect on the human impact on the environment. In particular, we can highlight the disastrous effects that deforestation has had both here and around the world. But more than just emphasizing the negative, we can also celebrate the beauty of nature and reaffirm for ourselves, as well as instill within our children, an awareness of the importance of preservation of our precious resources. Have you ever stood next to a majestic Redwood or gigantic Sequoia? Have you ever experienced what it is like walking through the remnants of a primordial forest or jungle so thick that you cannot see a human standing four feet away?

There is something almost sacred about these places. Something indescribable, a connection that awakens or invigorates a part of our soul. The mystics understood this. As they strove to explain the unexplainable, they developed intricate rituals and practices to stimulate this awareness and tap into the Source of its power.

Tu B'shvat reminds us of this legacy and bids us to heighten our own appreciation of these precious resources and perhaps, if we are so inclined, to open ourselves up to shades of that awe and wonder.

We cannot afford to lose this precious legacy, especially when it is well within our power to prevent it!

L'shalom,
Brett

WRJ Catering Set-up Support Needed

We all know what an outstanding job Brotherhood catering does at our large congregational events and simchahs for our families. But did you know that the set up for these events was traditionally handled by WRJ sisters? WRJ Sisterhood is looking for new volunteers to help reestablish this commitment to Brotherhood. All it takes is two to three hours prior to an event to help set tables and arrange details to help make a simchah or event memorable. It's fun, a great way to socialize, and an excellent way to get your steps in. Training is available at the events. Please contact Jeanette Astrow at jlastrow@verizon.net or call 703-451-7007 if you are interested or have questions.

Cantor's Corner: The Dopey Challenge

AS I SIT DOWN to write this month's newsletter column, I have just returned after spending a few days away from the office to be with friends and family.

I participated in something that I've wanted to do for a couple of years called, appropriately, "The Dopey Challenge." "The Dopey Challenge" is a four-day race challenge at Walt Disney World in Orlando. Starting on the Thursday morning of the week of New Year's Day, I ran a 5K with wonderful Beth El member **Janet Garber**. It was a freezing, fun, and silly experience — and one that I'm grateful to have had.

What makes this "The Dopey Challenge," however, is that the next day it is followed by a 10K, the day after that a half marathon, and the day after that, an entire full marathon! All in all, the race challenge equaled 48.6 miles, spanning a four-day period of time. (Don't worry — **Janet Garber** very smartly just ran the 5K!)

This challenge was an athletic endeavor, but it was also much more than that. It was test of strength and perseverance as well as moderation and pacing of oneself. The most important thing was figuring out how sleep and nutrition would factor into this experience, and how to not push myself too hard on a particular day, so that I would have more energy in reserve for the next. It was also a mental challenge. 48.6 miles give someone a lot of time to decompress, to think and to relax.

I'm grateful for this experience and truly grateful to the synagogue community for helping me carve this time out of my calendar. I don't take that for granted.



We live in a very busy age. "I'm so busy" has somehow become an appropriate answer when someone asks, "How are you?" Our hyper-connected, iPhone and WiFi world sometimes demands this of us. I love being a part of the Beth El community. I feel truly blessed to serve it as its Cantor. One of the things that I have learned is that to best serve our community, it's best to carve out time for myself when appropriate. When I do this, I can truly then give my all to the synagogue. I share this publicly because I've had many conversations with congregants throughout the years who have shared similar thoughts

with me. Work/life balance has become a concern that all share.

Luckily, Judaism gives us a blueprint for taking time for ourselves called Shabbat. It is the time for us to be with ourselves, our families, our loved ones, and our thoughts. Sometimes, when we're lucky, we can give ourselves additional Shabbat experiences during the year as well, called three-day weekends and vacation time. These are not just gifts of time, but sometimes essential moments for us to care for ourselves.

Be proud of this time. Our tradition says it is good for us. We need not all be "Dopeys." What we all need, with regularity, is to find balance and moderation in our lives.

When we find this balance, then we can truly give it our all to our loved ones, our communities, and indeed, our synagogue.

— **Cantor Kaufman**

2018-19 ECLC REGISTRATION OPENS FEB 1

for new families

Our Early Childhood Learning Center offers a 12-month program with part-time and full-time options for children who will be 2, 3, or 4 by Sep. 30. Our full-time toddler program accepts students from 16 -23 months.

The ECLC is licensed by the State of Virginia and is open to all members of the community.

For more information or to set up a tour, please contact Director **Dina Backer** at 703-537-3084.

Give your preschooler the gift of great learning experiences, new friends, and lots of fun!



President's Point of View

I'VE JUST RETURNED from celebrating my Dad's 90th birthday. My sister, Nicole, who you may have met at the second-night seder a few years ago, was responsible for assembling a slide show that took my dad from his high school photo through his recent excursion with us to Oktoberfest.

There are different approaches towards photographs. A good friend of mine tells a story about his adventurous college professor. When he asked the professor why he had no pictures of his adventures, he said that when he forgot, it was time to go back. That story made quite an impression on me, and complemented my current interest in mindfulness; I'd rather live the experience than document it. Nevertheless, I have to admit, looking through those pictures was fun. Aside from the obvious comments about my ever-changing hairstyles, it prompted a lot of memories, and quite a bit of laughter. My own children enjoyed seeing the people in our family stories, and had memories of their own, which we shared over pizza that evening.

There were, unfortunately, quite a few people that Nicole and I did not recognize. We had the photo memories, but not the identities. Dad could tell us who some of the people were, but not all of them. We have a few other sources for information, but their numbers are dwindling too. There are lessons in here. Of course, label your photographs! You may think that you'll never forget the relatives at that table at your child's b'nai mitzvah, but you will. Even more importantly, however, get the stories. I inherited a beautiful Edwardian-style ring from my mother. I so wish that I could ask her about it, or about some of the other beautiful things, that I frankly didn't even know she had. Those stories become part of your family's collective memory, with or without the accompanying photos.

I hope that you all have the pleasure of enjoying a 90th birthday with someone you love, and who can still share family lore. Photos and stories may be a poor substitute, but you will treasure them.

— **Julienne Bramesco**



Executive Director's Entry

IN THINKING ABOUT Martin Luther King Day, I was struck by **Cantor Kaufman's** words at the 5th Grade MLK Shabbat service. He opened the service stating that the Civil Rights

Movement isn't over if you are persecuted based on race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation. His point resonated with me, and not only because as Jews, we are still persecuted in America. We are among one of the only minority groups where it is difficult to identify us. So while we have very serious security concerns, we have the relative safety of looking like the majority in power.

MLK Day is also a reminder that there are causes that are bigger than any one of us. We come from a people that throughout history have been willing to sacrifice in order to protect others. On occasion it became necessary to risk lives to ensure that our faith survived. We should feel a sense of obligation to protect others in our society who are persecuted and cannot fight back. Our religious leaders, **Rabbi Isserow** and **Cantor Kaufman**, model this behavior for us every time they

march for a social justice cause. Most recently, they both participated in the Thousand Ministers March last August in favor of social justice and civil rights.

Our synagogue does so many wonderful things for others in our society. We have volunteers that cook food for the Carpenter's Shelter. We have partnered with the Global Center for Refugee Education and Sciences to ensure a safe learning environment for immigrants who want to learn English and job skills. **Cantor Kaufman's** recent concert to raise money for HIAS was an amazing success. The legendary work of our Caring Community Committee for members of our congregation who need help after a surgery or loss of a loved one is tremendous.

Beth El Hebrew Congregation really believes in *tikkun olam* and *tzedakah*. And yet, there is so much more to do. Perhaps that is the true legacy of Dr. King. No matter how much we do to help, we will never be finished.

Adam Wallach
Executive Director

Beth El Attracts Very Good People



TWO YEARS AGO, a prospective member walked into our offices to inquire about Beth El. She and her family were relocating to the DC area. They wanted to be part of a temple community. Later that month, it was announced that **Laura Naide**, our Office Manager/Assistant Director, had completed her Masters in Jewish Education and was leaving Beth El to become the Director of Education at Etz Chayim. We advertised for an Office Manager. The very nice woman, who had inquired about Beth El, saw our ad and responded. This prospective member is our current Office Manager extraordinaire, **Jolene Shif**. When Jolene interviewed for the position, she informed us that her husband, Lt. Colonel **Boris Shif**, might only be at his present assignment for two years. Our previous office Manager, **Fran Simon**, had been in the same situation; however two years turned into seven. We thought it was worth having a very good person for two years with the hope it could be longer.

The inevitable has come to pass: Jolene's husband has been selected for an important position in the US Air Force, so the Shif family will be leaving Beth El in June for their next journey.

Jolene has carried on the tradition of outstanding su-

perb Religious School Office Managers. She has restructured our registration system, enhanced our communication process, provided sound advice on programming, and has been a reassuring voice to parents and teachers that "we will work it out." Jolene's consistently cheerful demeanor, her energy and dedication, and her "can-do" attitude has made all of our lives easier. A significant contribution made by Jolene was her active involvement in our youth engagement program. She started Club 3/4, and she was part of the incredible MAJYK Management Team.

I am not sure what's in the water at Beth El — whatever it is — we have benefited from a long line of fabulous Office Managers who are kind, competent, dedicated, and active members of the Jewish community. For that, we have been blessed.

Please stop by Jolene's office and wish her and her family the best before she leaves.

L'Shalom,
Barry Smith, Director of Education
bsmith@bethelhebrew.org

Friday, Feb. 9, 7:30 pm – Special Guest to Speak at Disability Shabbat

IN RECOGNITION of Jewish Disability Awareness and Inclusion Month (JDAIM), February 2018, Beth El is hosting a special Shabbat service on disability and inclusion with a special speaker, Lauren Eden, a member of the Best Buddies Capital Region Advisory Board. Best Buddies® builds one-to-one friendships between people with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities through school and community friendship programs. Also, this service is a Soul Shabbat, which is being led by the Religious School's sixth grade. This service is sure to be a spirited event that people will be talking about.

For more information or if you have any questions, ideas or suggestions, please contact me.

Jeanne Holden
Inclusion Committee Chair
jeanneholden@yahoo.com

ReelAbilities
FILM FESTIVAL
NORTHERN VIRGINIA
Powered by JCCNV

SAVE THE DATE
MARCH 10-17, 2018

Jewish Disability Advocacy Day 2018

The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington

Date: Tuesday, February 6, 2018

Time: 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Capitol Hill: Rayburn House Office Building

45 Independence Ave SW, Washington DC 20515

WRJ News

IT IS WITH GREAT sadness that we say goodbye to our beloved sister, **Ruth Folkman**. Ruth was always upbeat and involved in Beth El life. She was an active and inspirational member on the WRJ board as well as a faithful mah jongg player and friend. Our memories of Ruth will truly serve as a blessing in all of our lives.

Hamantaschen baking and sales continue through the month of February. Please submit your order ASAP. The cost for one dozen is \$10. The order form can be found within this newsletter as well as in the Beth El office. If you would like to help bake or provide dough-nations, you may contact wrjhospitality@gmail.com or sign up through our SignUp Genius link also found on the flyer.

Please join us on Feb. 21 at 6 pm to hear from Dr. Stacy Lang, PhD, LCSW-C from the Jewish Council Against Domestic Abuse. Women and men are invited. A baked potato bar will be available for \$5. RSVPs are requested for food planning. (See page 11 for more details.)

Curl up with a good book during these cold winter days. The WRJ Book Club will meet on Feb. 14 at 11 am to discuss *All Who Go Do Not Return* by Shulem Deen. If you'd like to be added to the Book Club email list, please send an email to wrjhospitality@gmail.com.

B'shalom and stay warm,
Jeanette Astrow — WRJ President

Upcoming events:

- **Next WRJ Meeting** — Feb. 7
- **Hamantaschen Baking** — Feb. 4, 7, 11, 14, and 28
- **JCADA** – Feb. 21
- **Carpenters Shelter** — Cook on Feb. 25 and serve on Feb. 26
- **Knitting** — Feb. 11 and 25
- **Book Club** — Feb. 13 (*All Who Go Do Not Return* by Shulem Deen)
- **Mah Jongg** — Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday (contact **Susan Whitman** @ susangwhitman@gmail.com to be included in informational e-mailings)

ECLC News

PARENTS OF prospective preschool children often ask if we think their children are too young for school. We, of course, being in the preschool business, do not think so! In today's world, families are often composed of two working parents, requiring some sort of care for their youngsters. While the choices are many, often parents want a quality program — one where their children will be safe, loved, and provided learning opportunities. Preschools (as opposed to daycares) are often the best avenue to explore.

Preschools for our youngest friends have benefits that are undeniably important to the development of our children to prepare them for their kindergarten years and beyond. An article in *GREAT SCHOOLS Magazine* in March of 2016 listed nine reasons a child should attend preschool:

- Preschool is an opportunity for growth.
- Preschool prepares children for kindergarten.
- Preschool promotes social and emotional development.

- Children get to make choices.
- Children learn to take care of themselves and others.
- Preschool promotes language and cognitive skills.
- Preschool teachers nurture a child's curiosity.
- Preschool activities boost pre-math and literacy skills.
- Preschool helps develop motor skills.

I am proud that our JCCNV-Beth El ECLC offers a Reggio Emilia-inspired program that helps our kids explore and learn about the world around them and provides a foundation for learning, both socially and academically

Registration is open for the 2018-19 school year! Don't miss the chance to give your child a head start on great development!

L'shalom
Dina Backer

Brotherhood News

A LOT IS HAPPENING at Beth El and Brotherhood is helping to make it happen. Hopefully, you were able to attend Brotherhood's (now) Annual Chili-Football-and-Games Tailgate Gathering at the end of January, and will be in attendance at the Feb. 25 free "sneak peek" screening of the ReelAbilities Festival film *The Finishers*, an inspiring story of a father's relationship with his wheel-chair bound son. (This event is jointly sponsored by the Inclusion Committee, WRJ, and Brotherhood.)

On Tuesday, Feb. 27, Brotherhood will host the 60th Annual Interfaith Dinner with Fairlington United Methodist Church, featuring **Rabbi Gerry Serotta**, Executive Director of the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington, whose keynote topic is a timely "How Does the InterFaith Community Address Our Country in a Time of National Stress?"

Soon thereafter, on Mar. 4, be sure to have your tickets in hand for the Brotherhood-sponsored annual Purim Carnival. Throughout February, advance discount tickets are being sold in the foyer, and further discounts are offered to Brotherhood members and their families. See *Bulletin* flier inserts for additional details.

Last month Brotherhood volunteers prepared a Shabbat dinner for the 150 Jewish teens who participated in the NFTY-MAR Mid-Atlantic Junior Youth Kallah (MAJYK) hosted at Beth El. A big thank you is extended to our chefs, **Jake Gallun** and **Joel Bernstein**, event organizer and on-site managers, **Bob Shaver** and **Roberto Mosse**, food purchaser, **Judy Jankowski** and the many others who helped with the event: **Stuart Backer**, **Greta Bolton**, **Stuart Feldstein**, **Josh** and **Belinda**

Folb, Debbie Katz, Matt Mutterperl, Sue Rabin, Donna Sachs, Sally and Bill Schneider, Libby and Norm Starler, Ron and Gerrie Sturman, and Rhubarb Woodmansee.

How does all this happen? Because of dedicated volunteers of course. Meet **Stuart Davis**, Brotherhood's 2nd Vice President, in charge of Membership and National Programs. Stuart retired two years ago from the Army Corps of Engineers, where he worked as an economist and community planner working on floodplain management and public surveys. Since retiring he has volunteered as an elementary school tutor, a tree steward, and an adult literacy tutor. After a break of several years, Stuart is serving his second term as membership vice president. He has been a brotherhood member since he and his wife, Nancy, joined the synagogue in 1987. Stuart and Nancy's two children, Josh and Leah, have had their bar and bat mitzvahs and confirmations at Beth El. Stuart served seven years as the co-chair of the Social Action Committee, and he was a founding board member of Beth El House. He is regular participant in the Saturday morning Torah discussion group and an active member of the Chapel in the Woods restoration crew. For Stuart, Brotherhood has been a place to enjoy and contribute to nearly every aspect of synagogue life, and it has presented many opportunities to make new friends.

John Jankowski
Brotherhood President
brotherhood@bethelhebrew.org

60th Annual Interfaith Dinner

ON FEB. 27 at 6:30 pm, *all members* of Beth El Hebrew Congregation and Fairlington United Methodist Church (FUMC) are invited to attend the 60th annual Interfaith Dinner for an evening meal and social camaraderie. These friendship dinners date back to the 1950s when Fairlington allowed us to use their church building for services and activities before the new Beth El synagogue opened in 1957. To show our appreciation, Brotherhood presented a gift to FUMC and beginning in February 1958, the two congregations joined annually with a "home-and-home" dinner to maintain our friendship.

This year, the Beth El Brotherhood is hosting the dinner. The keynote speaker is **Rabbi Gerry Serotta**, Executive Director of the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington, discussing "How Does the InterFaith Community Address Our Country in a Time of National Stress?" The cost to attend is \$15/person. RSVPs to **Ron Sturman** (rgsturman@msn.com) are requested no later than Feb. 23rd so that we can estimate an accurate meal count.



Member News

Welcome to:

Rebecca Abels

Charles Werchado

Laura and Alan Bloodgood

Mazal Tov to:

Nigel Crocombe and Liz Cote on the birth and baby naming of son Ezra David Crocombe

Peter Orens on his 70th birthday

Michel Margosis on receiving a national Daily Point of Light Award for exceptional volunteering in the community

Liz and Matt Leavitt on the birth of granddaughter Charlie Rose Wilcox

Linda and Steven Shapiro on the birth of grandson Jeremy Robert Yijin Wang



Condolences to:

David Weinstein on the death of his mother, Carol Weil



The Congregation extends sincere condolences to family and friends of this member, recently taken from us:

Ruth Folkman



The Congregation extends sincere condolences to family and friends of former member, recently taken from us:

James Hayman

May the memory of the dear departed always be a blessing and inspiration to all who knew and loved them.

May our synagogue community bring comfort to those who mourn them.

May the families know of no more sorrow.

Amen.

Ross Scholarship Nominations

YOUR OPPORTUNITY to recognize and recommend an outstanding graduating senior for Beth El's prestigious Marc S. Ross Scholarship is now underway. The Marc S. Ross Scholarship Committee is presently accepting nominations. The scholarship is awarded annually to a graduating high school senior continuing in higher education who has made a significant contribution during his/her high school years to the temple and/or the Jewish community. The recipient will be a Beth El member who best exemplifies the values of scholarship, integrity, and devotion, which were so embodied in the life of Beth El Past President Marc Ross. The award will not be based on financial need.

The deadline for receiving nominations is Monday, March 12, 2018. Nominations can be made by anyone,

including parents. All temple members are encouraged to nominate a young man or woman whom they feel would be eligible for the award. Nominees will be informed of their anonymous recommendation, and will be required to complete a short application and personal statement. Without being nominated, an otherwise qualified candidate will never be considered by the committee.

A nomination letter, no longer than two pages, should be sent to: **John Jankowski**, Chairman, 3930 Lincolnshire Street, Annandale, VA

22003. Any questions regarding the scholarship should be directed to John, who may be reached at (571) 236-4051 or by email at johnsimcha@cox.net.

Transition News



THE BATON HAS been passed from the Pulpit Search Committee, which worked incredibly hard to find our next Senior Rabbi, to the Transition Team which has also been working hard for the past six months placing into motion our plans for making the change from **Rabbi Isserow** to **Rabbi Spinrad** a smooth and relatively seamless experience for all of us.

Change can be difficult. **Donna Sachs**, who is a member of the Transition Team, said something to us the first time we met which left quite an impression on me. She counseled her daughter **Faren**, who will be one of the first B'nei Mitzvah under Rabbi Spinrad, and who is naturally concerned about the rabbi change, that Beth El is a special place; clergy will change but it is her family's connection and commitment to Beth El that is important.

Beth El has been in existence for almost 160 years with **Rabbi Spinrad** becoming ONLY our sixth Senior Rabbi. We, the congregants past and present, are the reason this temple has stood the test of time. It is our commitment that no matter what change occurs, Beth El will continue to thrive.

We are in touch with **Rabbi Spinrad** and his wife **Gal**, helping them to navigate their move to a new city, but my team's first commitment until July 1, 2018, is to honor our fifth Senior Rabbi, **Rabbi Isserow** for his years of service and commitment to us.

There are many ways we are making that happen:

- A picnic the last day of Religious School.
- A congregational Sabbath dinner June 15.
- The Gala June 16.

Please feel free to drop us an email at: Transition2018@bethelhebrew.org with any and all suggestions you have.

Pamela Zitron — Transition Chair

Rabbi Isserow's Retirement Gala

PLANS ARE coming together for a festive gala on Saturday night, June 16, honoring **Rabbi Isserow** on his retirement.

A wonderful reception, delicious dinner, dancing, and silent auction will fill this fundraising event as we all say "thank you" and extend **Rabbi Isserow** good wishes as he retires.

It will be elegant... it will be fun... but it won't be the same without YOU!

For questions about the gala, please contact either **Meryl Goldhammer** (stafm@aol.com) or **Rhoda Goldman** (lennieg@cox.net), chairs

Silent Auction Kickoff

PLEASE MARK your calendar for the retirement events honoring **Rabbi Isserow** in June - including the gala and silent auction on Saturday, June 16.

There will be something for everyone and I need your help. I am the Silent Auction Chair and will work with congregants to gather fabulous items to auction to make this a wonderful fundraiser in honor of **Rabbi Isserow**. Can you donate tickets to sporting events or the theater? Do you have a favorite restaurant that would donate a gift card or certificate? Would you like to get a group together and create a fun-filled basket? Do you have a specialty item you create and would like to donate? There are so many ways to contribute to the

success of the silent auction!

If you are interested in participating and don't want to shop, please let me know — you can donate money to the silent auction and I will create a wonderful gift basket or buy a hot commodity to auction.

You also want to prepare to shop! We already have a fantastic list of items working and there will be something for every budget and age!

If you have any questions about the silent auction, please contact me at BEHCsilentauction@gmail.com. Thank you in advance for making this a wonderful and fun event.

Sally Schneider

Bat Mitzvah

Samara Tanner
February 17, 2018

Samara Tanner is an 8th grade AAP Honors student at Mark Twain Middle School. She is an avid swimmer and softball player, and has a passion for biology, Broadway — especially *Once on this Island* and *Hamilton: An American Musical* — and Star Wars.

She has been “past patiently waiting” for her Bat Mitzvah, and is thrilled to be able to celebrate with her friends and family. She thanks her family, **Rabbi Isserow** and **Cantor Kaufman**, and her tutor, **Robin Thompson**, for all of their hard work and dedication to help Samara reach this special day.



J Street 2018 Conference is in DC

J Street’s 2018 National Conference is coming up Apr. 14-17 in Washington, DC. The conference promises to be an excellent avenue for deepening engagement and knowledge about Israel just six months before the critical 2018 midterm elections. Past conferences have included speakers such as Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Senator Tim Kaine, Senator Bernie Sanders, members of the Israeli Knesset, and more.

You can find more information and register for the conference at www.jstreet.org/conference. **Sign up before February 1 to get the early bird rate.** If five or more people attend from your synagogue, you will also receive a 20% discount.

Questions? Contact Tali DeGroot at talid@jstreet.org or 202-448-1617.



*...helping homeless families, with an emphasis on victims of domestic violence,
transition to independent living with dignity through subsidized housing and individualized services...*

IN APPRECIATION — Without these generous donors Beth El House would not have flourished since our incorporation in 1992 — **Janet Garber** (WRJ Social Action Chair) organizes gift cards for our residents families during the holidays; **Lorraine Friedman** of the Dream Dog Foundation (dreamdog.org) donates new books for each of the children in our program; and each of our congregants who remember Beth El House with their generous support. We could not have extended our services to families over the years without our dedicated foundations that underwrite our mission: Cloud-break Foundation, TJX Foundation, and the Maple Tree Fund. And last, the generous funding we receive from Fairfax County and where we hope to participate in a new initiative, the Rapid Re-Housing Program, when funds become available. To all of these contributors we owe our existence and our high level of excellence. Thank you.

RESIDENT UPDATE — One resident, with the assistance of our Case Manager, Alisha Cooper, has located an available work position while she is waiting for approval on child care. Another resident is achieving program goals toward her independent living. Another resident has started meeting with her financial mentor to resolve budget and finance issues and is seeking a positive male role model to mentor her boys in terms of leadership, guidance, and discipline. Mothers’ meetings at Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church will continue to foster a sense of community and sharing among our resident families.

BEH STAFF AND BOARD UPDATE — A very special welcome to our new Board Member, Rev. Dr. Bob Melone, the pastor of Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church since 2013. The church hosts our monthly mothers’ meetings and is the site for our annual holiday party. Bob is committed to engaging the church in our mission and contributing to our outreach efforts. Also we want to extend our congratulations to our Executive Director, Melonie Barrow, who has been promoted to Homeless Services Program Manager for Prince William County.

We are searching for a grant writer, an ESL teacher, a therapist familiar with treating trauma issues, and volunteers to grow our program. If you could provide your services or would like more information please contact **Melinda Selden** (703-569-5443 or melindaselden@verizon.net) or visit our website at www.bethelhouseva.org.

WRJ Social Action

PLEASE PLAN to join us Wednesday, Feb. 21st at 6 pm to hear from the Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse (JCADA). JCADA serves the Greater Washington DC area, including Maryland, DC, and Northern Virginia. Services include support for victims/survivors of domestic abuse and elder abuse, as well as for their friends and loved ones; Prevention programming for teens and young adults; and community education workshops and trainings.

Our speaker will be Stacy Lang, PhD, LCSW-C, the Outreach Director and clinician for JCADA. Dr. Lang carries a clinical caseload, and develops and facilitates community workshops and training around the issues of domestic abuse. Dr. Lang's presentation is geared toward adults — men and women.

Prior to Dr. Lang's presentation, WRJ will serve our ever-popular Baked Potato Bar.

The cost of this program is \$5.00. Reservations and prepayment are requested for planning purposes — but are not required. If possible, please let us know you are coming — wjhospitality@gmail.com or garberj123@gmail.com or 703-256-7988.

Please join us for food and a thought-provoking presentation and discussion on the very important subject of Domestic Abuse.

For more information on JCADA, see their website at jcada.org/LightTheWay

Janet Garber

703-256-7988

garberj123@gmail.com



Jewish War Veterans Celebrate Hanukkah



L to R: Norton Paley, Enid Liess, Annette Paley, Jerry Liess, Richard Kurtz



L to R: Linda Vogel, Larry Vogel, Carolyn Miller, Naomi Mercer

Readers of Beth El

THE READERS of Beth El will meet on Monday, Mar. 5, 2018, at 7:30 pm to discuss our next book. *The Weight of Ink* by Rachael Kadish is a “lengthy but engaging” work of historical fiction, set in London of the 1600s and the 21st century. The story explores Jewish life of the 1600s while following present-day academics trying to make sense of a mystery from the past. Please join us!

Lynne Orens

lorens750@aol.com

~ February 2018 ~ S

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
			
<p>4 Super Bowl 52/National Stuffed Mushroom Day 10-11a Adult Hebrew Classes 10a-12p Chapel in the Woods Workday 10a-12p Hamantaschen Baking 10a-12p Religious School 1-4 Bridge</p>	<p>5 National Weatherperson's Day/World Nutella Day</p>	<p>6 National Chopsticks Day/Frozen Yogurt Day 1:30-3:30p WRJ Mah Jongg 7-9p EC Meeting</p>	<p>7 National Periodic Table Day 5:30-6:15p Religious School Canteen 6-7:30p WRJ Board Meeting 6:15-8p Religious School 6:30-8:30p Hamantaschen Baking 7-8p Introduction to Judaism</p>
<p>11 National Inventors Day 10-11a Adult Hebrew Classes 10a-12p Hamantaschen Baking 10a-12p Religious School 1-4 Bridge</p>	<p>12 Abraham Lincoln's Actual Birthday/Darwin Day</p>	<p>13 International Pancake Day/Tortellini Day 11a-12:30p WRJ Book Club 1:30-3:30p WRJ Mah Jongg</p>	<p>14 Valentine's Day/Ferris Wheel Day 5:30-6:15p Religious School Canteen 6:15-8p Religious School 6:30-8:30p Hamantaschen Baking</p>
<p>18 National Eat Ice Cream for Breakfast Day/Wine Day NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL 10a-12p Brotherhood Board Meeting 1-4 Bridge</p>	<p>19 Presidents' Day/Chocolate Mint Day/International Tug of War Day OFFICE CLOSED</p>	<p>20 Love Your Pet Day 11:30a-2p NARFE 1:30-3:30p WRJ Mah Jongg 6:30-7:30p RSSC Beth El House 7-9p Board of Directors Meeting</p>	<p>21 Sticky Bun Day 5:30-6:15p Religious School Canteen 5:30-8:30p WRJ/JCADA Event 6:15-8p Religious School 6:30-8:30p Hamantaschen Baking</p>
<p>25 Let's All Eat Right Day 9:30a-12p Leadership Development Program 10-11a Adult Hebrew Classes 10a-1p Carpenter's Shelter Food Prep 10a-12p Religious School 1-4 Bridge 4-6:30p ReelAbilities Film Festival Sneak Peak</p>	<p>26 World Pistachio Day/Levi Strauss Day</p>	<p>27 International Polar Bear Day/Kahlua Day 8a-4p MVQU Group 1:30-3:30p WRJ Mah Jongg 6:30-10:30p 60th Annual Brotherhood Interfaith Dinner</p>	<p>28 Rare Disease Day/Chocolate Souffle Day 5:30-6:15p Religious School Canteen 6:15-8p Religious School 6:30-8:30p Hamantaschen Baking</p>

Shevat/Adar 5778 ~

Thu	Fri	Sat	Portions
1 National Freedom Day/Baked Alaska Day 6:30-7:30p BEH Meeting 6:30-8p WRJ Mah Jongg 7-11p Bridge	2 Groundhog Day 6:30-7:30p Pre-Service Wine and Cheese Oneg 7:30p Erev Shabbat Service 5:13p Candlelighting	3 The Day the Music Died 9-10a Torah Study 10:30a Shabbat Morning Service 6:22p Havdalah	Yitro Exodus 18:1-20:23 Isaiah 6:1-7:6, 9:5-6
8 Boy Scout Day/Opera Day 10a-12p Board of Lady Managers 6:30-8p WRJ Mah Jongg 7-8p Mussar 7-11p Bridge	9 National Pizza Day 6-6:30p Family Service 6:30-7:30p Communal Dinner 6:30-7:30p Pre-Service Wine and Cheese Oneg 7:30p Erev Shabbat Service/ Disability and Soul Shabbat with 6 th Grade 5:21p Candlelighting	10 Umbrella Day 9-10a Torah Study 10:30a Shabbat Morning Service 11a-12p Tot Shabbat 6:30p Havdalah	Mishpatim Exodus 21:1-23:18 2 Kings 12:1-17
15 Hippo Day 6:30-8p WRJ Mah Jongg 7-11p Bridge 7:30-9p Interfaith Bible Study	16 Do a Grouch a Favor Day 6:30-7:30p Pre-Service Wine and Cheese Oneg 7:30p Erev Shabbat Service 5:29p Candlelighting	17 Random Acts of Kindness Day 9-10a Torah Study 10:30a Shabbat Morning Service/Bat Mitzvah of Samara Tanner 6:38p Havdalah	Terumah Exodus 25:1-27:19 1 Kings 5:26-6:13
22 George Washington's Actual Birthday 6:30-8p WRJ Mah Jongg 7-8p Mussar 7-11p Bridge	23 International Dog Biscuit Appreciation Day 6:30-7:30p Pre-Service Wine and Cheese Oneg 7:30p Erev Shabbat Service 5:37p Candlelighting	24 World Sword Swallower's Day/World Bartender Day 9-10a Torah Study 10:30a Shabbat Morning Service 11a-12p Purim Tot Shabbat 6:46p Havdalah	Tetzaveh Exodus 27:20-30:10 1 Samuel 15:2-34

February seems to be a month of innovation; so many things were discovered, invented, unveiled, issued, copyrighted, patented, or begun in February. Here are just a few:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1, First US Patent and Digital Voicemail | 17, Washing Machine |
| 3, <i>Dragnet</i> and First Paper Money in US (<i>not US yet at the time!</i>) | 18, Pluto and Statue of Liberty Patent |
| 4, Facebook and Rubber Galoshes and Teflon | 19, Phonograph |
| 6, Sunmaid Raisins and <i>It's a Wonderful Life</i> | 21, John Deere Plough |
| 8, Self-Starting Automobile Engine | 23, <i>As Time Goes By</i> |
| 9, Fulton's Steamboat | 24, Perforated Postage Stamps and Apple Computer |
| 10, Smoke/Heat Detector | 26, First NYC Subway Line and Hobie Surfboards |
| 11, National Inventor's Hall of Fame | 27, Aspirin |
| 12, Pizza "Package Saver" | 28, Sears |
| 14, Smith and Wesson Firearm | |

Member Spotlight: Gilah Goldsmith

“**M**OM, HOW COME we don’t go to church?” Gilah Goldsmith was startled some forty years ago when her young son came home from school and asked that question. “Jewish people don’t go to church,” she said. “Then what do they do?” Joe asked. That question launched the family’s long relationship with Beth El. Today, you may know Gilah as the long-time leader of the Saturday morning Torah study group and chair of the Library Committee.

The road from secular to Jewishly-knowledgeable was winding. Growing up in a secular family, Gilah attended a few years of religious school and knew her aleph bet but not much more. As an adult, she found herself in the position of many families with two working parents: Saturdays — especially Saturday mornings — were a time for errands and family time. However, Gilah and her husband Herb developed a relationship with Beth El because of some of its programs, **Rabbi Fink**, and religious school for their two children.

A few years earlier, **Rabbi Fink** had started a Torah study group and Gilah began attending. She observes that after the death of her mother she grew tired of being angry at God and needed to know more. She began teaching herself biblical Hebrew and still remembers the book — *The First Hebrew Primer for Adults*. After dropping her children off at school, she’d head to McDonald’s and over an Egg McMuffin (sans meat) study the primer.

One thing led to another and Gilah began teaching in Beth El’s religious school: fifth-grade Jewish studies and the eighth and ninth-grade BEEP program for teens between B’nei Mitzvah and confirmation. Today she says that the most important thing a Jewish parent can do is to show children that being Jewish is a constant process of growth and learning; being Jewish is not about easy answers.

As her knowledge grew, she became more active in the Torah study group and encouraged by then **Rabbi Krause**, began sharing leadership of the group with him. After **Rabbi Krause** left the congregation, Gilah took over the leadership and continues to this day. That late in life Herb began attending is one of her most rewarding memories. Today, the Torah study group includes a diverse group of people characterized by their curiosity, interest in Jewish tradition and text, along with personal meaning. Gilah says she learns as much

from the participants as they do from her.

Gilah began college as biochemistry major, then switched to modern English history (the period beginning in 1485 when the Tudors came to power.) After graduating from law school she worked for the Justice Department, then took ten years off to raise her two young children. It was during that period that she began teaching herself Hebrew, became a Master Gardener, taught religious school, and attended Torah study. She then returned to full time legal work, first at the EEOC and then at the Department of Defense.

Gilah was a graduate of one of the first Arlington County Master Gardener classes and maintained a 2,400 square foot vegetable garden to feed her family. From cucumbers and tomatoes, she branched out to a wider variety of vegetables. (Okra was *not* a success.) Neighborhood community gardening lore maintained it was not possible to grow cantaloupes in Arlington and after debunking that, Gilah generously shared her garden cantaloupes with her gardening neighbors. She learned to can and entered her produce in the Arlington County Fair, winning several prizes. (The year a rabbit ate the perfect red cabbage she was nurturing for a prize was *not* a highlight of her gardening career. To add insult to injury, the rabbit waited till the day before the fair before chomping on the cabbage.)

As part of her Master Gardener community service, Gilah staffed help desks and gave talks on planting vegetable gardens. She continues her gardening activities today and volunteers in Beth El’s Chapel in the Woods.

Since retiring a few years ago, Gilah has become a regular lecturer at the George Mason OSHER Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI). Her lectures have included Introduction to Rabbinic Judaism; Jews, Jewishness, and Judaism; The Real Meaning of Hanukkah; and the Dead Sea Scrolls. This year she will teach a course on the Human Role in Redemption: Hanukkah versus Purim.

Gilah also enjoys spending time with her daughter Miriam and her family (grandsons Hank and Zach) and hanging out with son Joe and his gaming friends.

And of course, she still leads Torah study every Saturday. Torah study takes place at 9 am every Saturday morning and all are welcome. If you’d like more information, you can contact Gilah at Gilah.goldsmith@gmail.com.



Beth El/JCCNV Events

Iris – A Movie about Fashion Star Iris Apfel

Wednesday, Feb. 7, 10:30 am-noon
2016 | 90 minutes | Documentary

Iris pairs the late documentarian Albert Maysles (*Grey Gardens*, *Gimme Shelter*), then 87, with Iris Apfel, the quick-witted, flamboyantly dressed 93-year-old style maven who has had an outsized presence on the New York fashion scene for decades. More than a fashion film, the documentary is a story about creativity and how a soaring free spirit continues to inspire. *Iris* portrays a singular woman whose enthusiasm for fashion, art and people are her sustenance. She reminds us that dressing — and indeed, life — is nothing but a grand experiment. “If you’re lucky enough to do something you love, everything else follows.” — POV/PBS website. This event is a collaboration with the award-winning documentary series POV.

In keeping with the theme of the movie, come wearing your most fun and innovative clothes and jewelry. Prizes will be awarded for the most head-turning outfit. This program will be one that both men and women will enjoy!

Hot chocolate, coffee, tea and cold weather snacks provided.

An Interfaith Program with Rabbi Isserow

Wednesday, Feb. 14, 10:30 am-noon

Join us for the last of our interfaith sessions with Rabbi Isserow before he retires. For the past three years, we have had the opportunity to hear and learn about other faiths through one-on-one interviews conducted by **Rabbi Isserow** with interfaith clergy. These interviews help us to understand and be more tolerant of other religions which is such an important part of life today. This is a program that everyone should attend. Please check back online, through Adults-on-the-Go or with Shelly for more detailed information.

All Beth El/JCCNV events are \$5 for all participants unless noted otherwise. Coffee, tea, and dessert will be provided.

To RSVP or get more information for all Beth El/JCCNV events, please contact Shelly.Rosenstein@jccnv.org, 703-537-3062

Protecting Your Hard-Earned Money

Wednesday, Feb. 21, 10:30 am-noon

Presented by: Thomas D. Manganello, Senior Counsel, Office of Investor Education & Advocacy, United States Securities & Exchange Commission

Older Americans are often the target of fraud. Learning how to invest safely can mean a big difference in your retirement years. Mr. Manganello will discuss investment risk and fees, the common red flags of investment fraud, and questions to ask before investing and choosing a financial professional. The talk will also cover how to plan for diminished financial capacity well before it happens.

SAVE THE DATE!

Special Joint Program with Beth El's Lifelong Learning Program

Shattering Switzerland's Neutrality Myth: The Inside Story of the Swiss Bank Investigation

Sunday, Mar. 18, 2 pm-4 pm

Presented by: Miriam Kleiman, Program Director for Public Affairs, National Archives

See page 16 for more details.

The JCCNV is not having its annual film festival this year, but encourages you to attend our special joint program in March. 



ALIVE!

In February we hold Beth El's annual **Housewares Drive for ALIVE!** Consider buying new pillows, towels, and sheets for people moving out of shelters and into their own homes. If not new, please be sure bedding and towels are very gently used. (No used pillows, please.) We are also collecting cookware, plates, cups, and cutlery. This collection begins on Feb. 1 and ends Feb. 28. Please respect those dates.

At the time this was written we didn't know who would be playing in the Super Bowl, but that won't stop us from promoting **SOUPERBOWL Sunday on Feb. 4**. Buy some soup and leave it in the box of the team you want to win the Super Bowl. Bring your team some luck and help feed Alexandria's hungry.

For more information about ALIVE! and these activities, contact **Deborah Schaffer** at schaffer4@gmail.com or go to alive-inc.org.

Culture Club Friday, Feb. 23

JOIN OTHER adult Beth El members and their guests as we visit the Smithsonian American Art Museum. We'll meet at 11:30 for lunch in the Kogod Courtyard (pay-as-you-go) and then view two very interesting exhibits - *Tamayo: The New York Years* and *Kara Walker: Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War*. For more information, www.americanart.si.edu.

Meryl Goldhammer
stafm@aol.com

Caring Community Committee to Observe *Mishloach Manot*

AS THOUGHTS turn happily to spring after some very cold winter weather, the Caring Community Committee is readying gift bags to distribute to those Beth El members who have difficulty getting out of their residences.

The occasion — Purim, whose customs include *mishloach manot*, distributing gifts to friends and neighbors. Each year several CCC members take the bags filled with hamantaschen and other goodies and visit with those congregants who are not able to join the joyous celebrations held in our building.

The committee encourages anyone who would like to spread a bit of “Jewish joy” to do their own version of *mishloach manot* and reach out to other members of our congregational family who would surely benefit from and appreciate this happy tradition.

To access the services offered by the CCC, contact committee chair **Ruth Perlstein** at 703-978-9341 or rperl8607@gmail.com.



Special Lifelong Learning and JCCNV Joint Program: Justice for the Survivors

MARK YOUR CALENDARS for Sunday, Mar. 18, when we co-host a special program with the JCCNV Adult Learning Institute called *Shattering Switzerland's Neutrality Myth: The Inside Story of the Investigation of Swiss Banks and Stolen Jewish Assets During the Holocaust*.

Former researcher and current National Archives employee Miriam Kleiman uncovered documents at the National Archives that helped shatter Switzerland's neutrality myth, and exposed Swiss culpability in hiding Jewish assets stolen by the Nazis during World War II. After working for a Jewish organization in coordination with the Senate Banking Committee, Kleiman was hired by powerhouse attorney Michael Hausfeld, who soon sued the Swiss Banks — pro bono — on behalf of Holocaust survivors and their heirs. Hausfeld will tell the story of litigating against the Swiss Banks and the role of the Swiss government. Michael and Miriam will share their amazing story and sleuthing methods to reveal one of the most eye-opening finds from the National Archives that ended one of the longest running myths of sovereign innocence in the face of evil.

Author Jane Schapiro spent years with Hausfeld and Kleiman, and chronicled this research and the litigation in her book *Inside a Class Action: The Holocaust and the Swiss Banks*. Through detailed research, court transcripts, and interviews with politicians, attorneys, historians, and survivors, Schapiro shows how egos, personalities, and values clashed in this complex and emotionally charged case. A book signing by Schapiro will follow the event.

\$5 for all attendees. RSVP: Submit payment and registration form to JCCNV, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax, VA 22031, attn. Shelly Rosenstein, or to BEHC, 3830 Seminary Road, Alexandria, VA 22304. BEHC members can also register online at lifelonglearning@bethelhebrew.org.

Maryn Simon
happyduke8@gmail.com

Shelly Rosenstein, JCCNV
Shelly.Rosenstein@jccnv.org

A Plea To Save a Remnant Forest on the Carrier-Karig Property

THE CARRIER-KARIG PROPERTY, which bears the names of its former owners, is located on Seminary Road across from the Episcopal Seminary and adjacent to Beth El Hebrew Congregation. The back portion of this 3.3-acre property consists of 1-1½ acres of forested steep slopes and a spring-fed wetland. According to Rod Simmons, Alexandria's Natural Resource Manager, there are trees on these slopes which are 100-200 years old. It is contiguous to several acres of mature forest owned by Beth El, also featuring steep slopes and ravines. Mr. Simmons has also verified that the spring-fed wetland forms the headwaters of Strawberry Run, water which ultimately ends up in the Chesapeake Bay.

Along with other members of Beth El, I have spent hundreds of hours over the last few years working in Beth El's forest to remove invasive species and encourage the regrowth of native understory trees and woodland flowers. In 2016 I noticed evidence of drilling for soil samples and tagging of trees on the Carrier-Karig property. I needed to know more about what the owner had in mind. What I discovered alarmed me. The planned development calls for razing the existing home which faces Seminary Road, and for construction of four huge (5000-6000 sq. ft.) new homes to be set in a row stretching from Seminary Road all the way back into the forested ravine. Each home is planned with a three car garage. A new road will be needed to access these homes from Seminary Road. The most significant concern quickly became the fourth home, which was — and still is — to be constructed at the back end of the property on the steep and forested slope which sits directly above the spring-fed wetland. This placement of the fourth home is very unwise, and all but ensures clear-cutting a significant portion of one of the few remaining mature forests left in Alexandria. This plan also subjects the steep slopes to grading and filling, the construction of huge retaining walls, probable pile driving, and inevitable erosion. Given the high component of marine clay on these slopes, this intensive development will also cause probable slope failure which will harm the neighbors living adjacent to this property. And the placement of this fourth home will most certainly degrade the water quality of Strawberry Run and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay.

The current plans call for funneling runoff into Alexandria's storm sewers, water that will contain pollutants from the roofs, sidewalks, lawns, and roadways of this new development. The city is now taxing businesses and residents alike to generate the huge sums of money needed to improve the quality of water coming out of its storm

sewers. The existing plan will only exacerbate this problem.

The goal is not to prevent development of the Carrier-Karig property, but instead to protect the forested slopes and wetland. Reasonable development of this lovely property is inconsistent with four huge homes, but if a fourth home must be built, the solution is to move that fourth home off the slope and shift it 40-50 feet closer to Seminary Road. The largest, oldest and most valuable trees are on the slopes and in the ravine, and not on the level ground which is far more suitable to construction. The developer can take advantage of the existing landscape by locating the new homes so that they overlook those slopes. There is simply no need to destroy the forested slopes and ravine.

I have lived in Alexandria for 30 years. I am a homeowner and taxpayer. I have a stake in the environmental health of the city, as does my 10-year-old daughter. We both believe these woods are special. Why not enrich the new homeowners, as well as the neighborhood and the city, by building away from the forested slopes and ravine? This will leave 1-1½ acres or so of wooded slopes, which when combined with Beth El's forest, will constitute a 3-4 acre refuge. What a lovely playground that forest could be for the children of the new homeowners. Maybe they will enjoy seeing the Pileated Woodpecker I have seen in those woods. It is a crow-sized, spectacularly red-crested woodpecker which emits a raucous jungle-like call. The majesty of seeing such a bird calling and alighting on a huge tree in the ravine might be special for neighborhood children and adults alike. These woods are home to rare and declining wildlife formerly common in Alexandria. If the developer cannot see his way to eliminate the fourth home, the city should at least move it off the slope and about 40-50 feet closer to Seminary Road. And please run the new sewer line back to Seminary Road instead of downhill through the forest and vulnerable wetland. If this development can be tweaked to move the construction away from the environmentally sensitive features of the property, we will all benefit. If not, then once again humans will have traded what God and Mother Nature gave us for an engineered environment, and we will be all the poorer for it.

This matter will be decided at a public hearing by a vote of the Alexandria City Council on Jan. 20, 2018.

— **Jeremy Flachs**, Alexandria Resident and Board Member, Beth El Hebrew Congregation

The Congregation Gratefully Acknowledges the Following Donations

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Thank you for your generous donations. No donation is too small. All donations are acknowledged in The Bulletin two months following their receipt. Acknowledgements are mailed with a minimum of \$18 per person per acknowledgment.

Candlelight Tours at Lloyd House

FOR MANY years now, Old Town Alexandria has offered residents and visitors a chance to see certain museums decked out for the holidays in what is known as Candlelight Tours. Three or four museums are decorated as they would have been in colonial times, and guests walk through the site learning of the history of each museum.

This year, Beth El was asked to participate as Alexandria wanted to expand their scope beyond the Christian holidays. Beth El Hebrew Congregation was represented in the Lloyd House, which stands on the corner of Washington and Queen Streets, just a few feet away from Beth El's original location.

Candlelight Tours occurred on Dec. 9 from 4-9 pm, and guests were treated to doughnut holes and lemonade, an introduction to Hanukkah, an overview of the original Beth El site, and, most exciting of all, to play dreidel! Dreidel was so popular that a second table had to be set up to accommodate the crowds!

By the end of the night, we had about 300 guests come through! The event was organized by **Maryn Simon** and **Debbie Spitzer** of Lifelong Learning and **Catherine Weinraub** of the Archives Committee. We could not have done it without the help that evening of **Ilene Reiter**, **David Simon**, **Fred Reiner**, **Arlyn Childs**, **Michael Weinraub**, and **David Weinraub**.



Maryn Simon and visitors

MLK Jr. Soul Shabbat



Cantor Kauffman and LEA



LEA

Around Our Community



The JCCNV Adult Learning Institute has a wide variety of special events and classes this winter and spring. Here is a sampling—find out more at <http://www.jccnv.org/adult-services/the-jccnv-adult-learning-institute-ali/#Courses>.

- In Search of Jewish Spirituality
- Science and Judaism
- Dream Weaver with Shlichah Liat Lisha
- The Artist's Mirror
- The Arab-Israeli Conflict through a Generational Lens
- Say "Hello" to Alexa
- How Jewish Values Help Us Cope with Adversity
- Entries from a Jewish Admiral's Log Book: The View of the Navy from an Aircraft Carrier Captain's Chair
- An Introduction to the Global Refugee Crisis through a Jewish Lens



The Jewish Federation of Greater DC also has a wonderful schedule of events. Find out more at <http://www.jccnv.org/https://www.shalomdc.org/events/>.

- Recipes for the Modern Jewish Cook
- Road to Independence Resource Fair
- Federation's Imagine Israel Changemakers Series
- Good Deeds Day 2018

SAVE THE DATE!

Join us for Zemer Chai's Annual Concert
"Millennials and Perennials"
Ancient words come to life for each new generation
Featuring the premiere of our commission, "A Prayer For Israel At 70"
by exciting young composer, Ari Sussman!

Sunday, June 10th, 2018 at 4:00pm
Congregation Beth El of Montgomery County

Beth El Hebrew Congregation, Alexandria, VA

Purim Carnival!



Sunday, MARCH 4, 2018

12:00 noon – 2:00 pm

Sponsored by the BEHC Brotherhood



Games! Costumes! Moon Bounce! Prizes!



PRICES:

Unlimited Games Superticket: **\$10** advance sales; \$12 at the door

Individual Games: 50 Cents each (tickets only at the door on day of the event)

Lunch ticket: **\$7** advance sales; \$9 at the door

(includes entrée, drink, chips, + dessert)

An additional \$1.00 discount on all advance sale tickets for Brotherhood Members and their families

Buy Advance Tickets at Beth El in the Lobby on Sundays, February 11th and 25th, 2018 10:00 a.m. to Noon, and Wednesdays, February 21st and 28th, 2018 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.

OR

Leave a Check payable to "Beth El Brotherhood" in the Temple Office and pick up your tickets on the morning of the Carnival. (Please note type of ticket, for how many people, and your phone number with your check).



Game Room for Kids Under 4

☺ Cake Walk, Arts & Crafts Room

Hamantaschen Sale!

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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Sign up at SignUpGenius at <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0a4eabac22a46-purim7/4306716>
or for more information, contact:!

Donna Blum-Kemelor, razzjazzdb@yahoo.com or
Alix Coughlin, rollergirlajc@gmail.com, Volunteer Coordinators
Matt Mutterperl, matt@mutterperl.com Chairman





Do a good deed for your Congregation and, if you have a practice or a business, for yourself!

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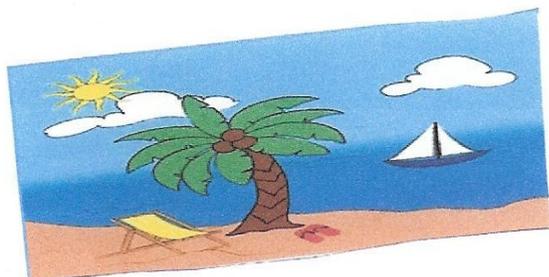
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Jeremy Flachs is a member of Beth El. Jeremy handles cases in both Virginia and the District of Columbia, where he has been licensed for 35 years. His law firm focuses only on serious personal injury claims.



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HOLD THE DATE

- Purim Carnival, Mar. 4
- WRJ Chocolate Seder, Mar. 6
- Bender JCC: Multifaith Film Fest, Mar. 8-11
- ReelAbilities Film Festival, Mar. 10-17
- Genealogy Program, Mar. 11
- Jewish Study Center: *Pollution, Climate Change, and Us*, Mar. 14
- Jewish Federation: 2nd Annual Disability Inclusion Resource Fair, Mar. 18
- JCCNV: *Women Rabbis, Revealed!*, Mar. 25
- First Seder at Home, No Shabbat Evening Service, Mar. 30
- Communal Second Seder, Mar. 31

- JCCNV Yom Ha'Shoah Commemoration, Apr. 8
- J Street 2018 National Conference in DC, Apr. 14-17
- Oral Rehydration Therapy Program, Apr. 15
- Jewish Federation: Good Deeds Day, Apr. 29
- JCCNV: Concert and Brunch/Local Lox Tasting, May 6
- Mother's Day Brunch, May 13
- Religious Action Center Consultation on Conscience, May 19-20
- Confirmation, June 3
- Israel@70 Community Concert, June 3
- Zemer Chai Annual Concert, June 10
- Rabbi Isserow's Retirement Gala, June 16