# CONTEMPORARY



NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2022







Chevra Kadisha, the Last Kindness

Jewish Tradition of the Burial Society





Get Involved Across the OT, Jewish Community

Learn about opportunities to get invoived

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NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2022



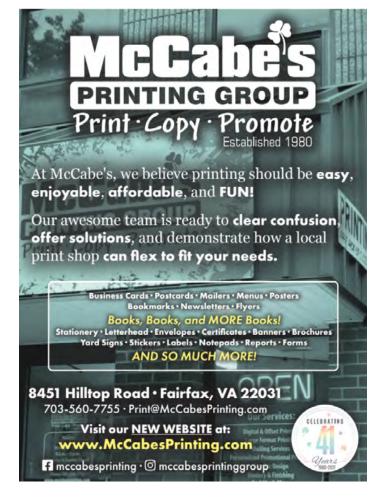
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  By George D. Billinson







# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Every time I write or edit an article for the Contemporary I learn so much, but this issue's topic of volunteering is especially so. Volunteering is meaningful to many of us and I personally find that it is the cure for pulling me out of depression.

You never know when you will utilize information you learned about at OT. I am a member of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom, where Muslim and Jewish women get together to discuss and compare our religions and traditions. After finishing the Chevra Kadisha (the Burial Society) article, I was having coffee with a few of my Muslim "sisters" and the topic of burial rituals came up. Many Muslim traditions are very similar to ours, including the respectful tradition of never leaving the body alone until burial. Even in our last moments, we have so much in common and so many potential paths to peace.

Thank you to everyone who worked on this issue including:

- Rabbi Kalender
- Rabbi Bedo
- Andrea Albersheim
- · Dan Noble
- The Proofreading Pool: Barbara Finkel, Rhoda Miller

Marnie Fienberg, Communications Chair



"Bruce stayed very involved and kept us well informed throughout the entire process.

We really felt that he took a personal interest in us and went the extra mile to make sure we had the loan that best met our needs."

- Theresa H.

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# CHEVRA KADISHA, THE LAST KINDNESS

BY MARNIE FIENBERG AND DEB GOULD

For a people whose experiences have made us self-reliant, it's no surprise that Judaism has a quiet society almost veiled in secrecy to help at our most vulnerable moment. Our tradition teaches that when we die, the body must be treated with the utmost respect until laid to rest. It is considered the highest form of kindness to perform this last act before the grave because the individual cannot pay you back.

The Burial Society, known in Aramaic as the Chevra Kadisha (holy society), is a group of trained volunteers who prepare the body for burial. At least one Chevra Kadisha exists for every Jewish community and the rites are more or less consistent throughout the Jewish world.

## OT'S CHEVRA KADISHA

In the 1980s, OT pulled together our first Chevra Kadisha, eventually having volunteers to care for both women and men. Zenia Bielsker tells the story about when there were two deaths on the same Saturday during Shabbat: a man and a woman. Both funerals were planned for the next day. That Saturday was also a B'nei Mitzvah and most of the Chevra Kadisha were guests. The men left the party early on

Saturday evening to take care of the man, the women members took care of the woman early the next morning.

The two main responsibilities of the Chevra Kadisha are: 1) the Tahara, cleansing the body and dressing it for burial, and 2) the Shemirah, keeping vigil until burial.



READ AN ARTICLE FROM A PAST CONTEMPORARY ABOUT A MOVING TAHARA EXPERIENCE.

# THE TAHARA

When a member of our Congregation passes away, the Rabbi calls the head of the Chevra Kadisha immediately, who then calls volunteers to do Tahara as soon as possible. At least four volunteers dress in paper robes and plastic gloves like a surgeon. New recruits are welcome to observe and read aloud the prayers for each step in English.

Rechitza (washing the body): Jewish tradition dictates that the body first must be thoroughly cleaned of dirt, bodily fluids, nail polish and anything else.

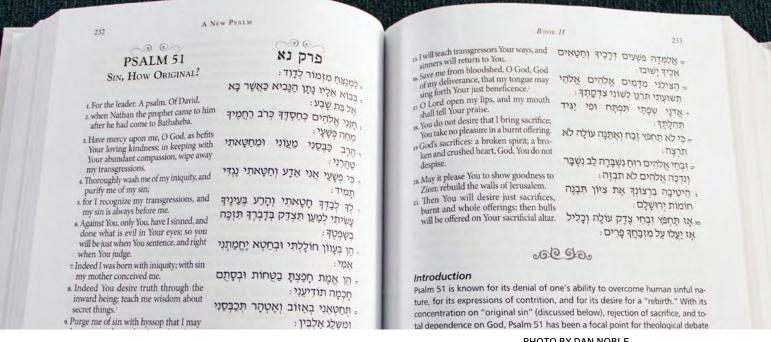


PHOTO BY DAN NOBLE

Shomrim traditionally read psalms aloud while they are watching over the deceased.

Tahara (ritual purification of the **body**): Three buckets of water are poured over the body, from head to toe, right side then left side, to purify it. The body then is gently patted dry with towels.

Halbashah (dressing of the body in white linen garments): The linen shroud symbolizes purity, simplicity, and dignity. They have no pockets and carry no material wealth.

Once the body is placed in the pine box casket, soil from Israel is sprinkled on the body and the box is closed.

#### THE SHEMIRAH

Once a Jewish person dies, the ideal situation is that they are not left alone until the burial and our Chevra Kadisha does its best to fulfill this ideal. A Shomer (m) or Shomeret (f) keeps Shemirah or a vigil. Midrashic tradition teaches that the human soul remains with the body for a period of three days. The reading of psalms by the shomrim (guards) provides the soul with comfort. Shemirah is done in shifts. At OT, we generally take 2 hour shifts around the clock.

Deb Gould, longtime member of OT, talks about her Shemirah experience:

"In my search for a deeper level of

religiosity I found myself compelled to understand the rituals surrounding Chevra Kadisha. I knew that in time this need would be more common for the elders who helped shape my life and possibly peers that would need my support. About 14 years ago, I spent 6 months studying to perform the chesed shel emet (true act of kindness). When my study partner's aunt died I was honored to be a shomeret. Sitting in the funeral home with my Psalms and prayer book, I was amazed at the power of the moment. My fear dissipated because I felt her soul guiding me to help her. I sat for 7 hours and the time flew. When I got to the burial ceremony I was acutely aware that my participation allowed her to be with Hashem and provided undeniable comfort for the family.

That was the first of many times I have been a shomeret, including multiple times at OT. This small act offers such a gift to both you and the family of mourners that it is truly an honor to perform."

# REORGANIZING

OT's Chevra Kadisha is being reorganized. If you are interested in learning more or volunteering, please contact the rabbis.





# **VOLUNTEERING AT OT**

Mitzvot and helping others are a key part of the Jewish value of Tikkun Olam. At different times of our lives we have more or less time to help out. Sometimes we want to volunteer with the children in our lives, not only to spend time with them, but to model this important Jewish pillar. There are so many ways to volunteer at OT.







PHOTOS BY DAN NOBLE (UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED) PHOTOS (LEFT PAGE): Ushers at Olam Tikvah; organizing the 2017 preschool clothing swap; art project for Good Deeds Day.

**PHOTOS (RIGHT PAGE):** Interfaith Power Pack Program 2018 (PHOTO BY DAVID MASSARIK); Zenia Bielsker helps pack mishloach manot for Purim.

#### PHOTOS (COVER, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP):

Packing mishloach manot for the congregation; making a Christmas meal at the Katherine Hanley Family Shelter; teaching about Yaffa at Israel Fest; Men's Club grills for the Labor Day picnic; packing up food donations for Good Deeds Day.

# THE CONTEMPORARY

Contact Marnie Fienberg at marniefien@gmail.com

Writers - If you have a story in mind or would just like to interview and/ or write stories, we need you once or twice a vear.

Proofing Pool - Need good technical editors for our proofreading pool. This involves an hour or less each issue.

## SISTERHOOD

Contact Lori Frumkin at lori.frumkin@yahoo.com or Melissa Albert at melissa@albertestate.com

Sisterhood has an ongoing need for volunteers throughout the year to help with community service, mailings, table set-up and checkin at brunches, program planning, fundraising, visiting the sick, and much more.

# SIMCHA CATERING

Contact Judy Dietrick at liflandj@yahoo.com Volunteers for B'nei Mitzvah Shabbat Kiddushes

- Wine and Juice Servers -Volunteers are needed each week to welcome everyone into the Social Hall for the Saturday luncheon.

- After Lunch Cleanup Crew -Volunteer on a rotating basis to help clear tables, place linens in laundry bags and remove buffet skirts - takes about 30 minutes. Adults and older students are welcome.

# JEWISH TREASURES JUDAICA SHOP

Contact Joanne Stryer at tjstryer@verizon.net

Store volunteers - Two volunteers per shift to work three and a half hours on Sundays approximately every six weeks during religious school.

# MEN'S CLUB

Contact mensclub@olamtikvah.org The objective of the Olam Tikvah Men's Club is to involve Jewish men in Jewish life. Here at OT, our club encourages men to grow together in all aspects of Jewish life, build friendships, and foster a strong Jewish community through

volunteerism. Throughout the year we have volunteer opportunities to help out in the kitchen during our brunches, support our Sukkot endeavors, deliver Yellow candles, assist in recycling projects, buildings and grounds tasks, including the OT garden, and much, much more.

# SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Contact Clare Bachner at clarebach@aol.com

There are more than 30 short and long-term projects throughout the year where the Social Action Committee requests direct participation or has specific items that are needed, and others where donations can be made to the Social Action fund to supplement the outreach. As we are receptive to the changing needs of our community, the best way to stay abreast of these volunteer opportunities is to contact Clare and add your email to our list.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 8** 





## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Deliver "Welcome" packets to new members - this involves picking up a Shabbat packet from the office, contacting the member and making arrangements to deliver the package. Contact: Karen Hasson karenrhasson@gmail.com

Hosts for "neighborhood coffees". Essentially, a get together for OT people in your neighborhood where there are new members, but any and all are welcome. Contact: Melinda Roth - melindaroth@cox.net and Debbie Weber -

debbieweber9@gmail.com

Be an OT celebrity for an "OT Talks" event - If you would like to share something unique that you are doing or have done, submit your name and what you plan to talk about to: Elisabeth Epstein elisabeth.a.epstein@gmail.com

# **GLEANING**

Contact Marc Berman at breitmarc@yahoo.com Gleaning involves bringing leftover

produce from farmers' markets to the foodbank each Sunday, Spring through late Fall. Great activity for families with older kids.

# ADULT EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Contact Sharyn Stahl at sews1128@verizon.net

Needs volunteers to help set/ clean up rooms, lots of different opportunities for the upcoming Scholar in Residence program in February 2023.

# GREEN INITIATIVE

Contact Mark Weiner at abbasaurus@gmail.com

Olam Tikvah's Green Initiative (OTGI), highlighted in the September issue, needs volunteers this spring, with opportunities in the community garden, water clean-up, a possible clothing-swap, and other projects.

For additional volunteer opportunities, please visit our website at olamtikvah.org.







PHOTOS BY DAN NOBLE

#### PHOTOS (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

**LEFT):** Jewish Treasures sale at Israel Fest; Calling the numbers at Kids' BINGO night; OTRS makes lasagna for Good Deeds Day; Bob Watts and Andy Baker support tech needs at events; the "Commissioners" of 2021 All-Star Shabbat.

# MISHPACHA

We are OT mishpacha (family) and we celebrate the good times and remember together. Here's where you can find out who from our congregation is celebrating. Keep in touch with us on Facebook at facebook.com/OlamTikvah.

# OT'S MISHPACHA IS GROWING! NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

OT is proud that during the past few years, we have grown and are at the largest number of members in OT's history. Thank you to everyone who has joined our mishpacha! Here is a little background about a few of our newest members.

A special welcome back to OT Harry & Ruth Leichter! Harry & Ruth watched OT grow from 16 families to the vibrant community that it is today. After a few years away from Northern Virginia they have returned, and have been enjoying Shabbat and holidays via livestream.

For Richie & Amy Ackerman and their daughter, Reva, OT is home because it is where Amy grew up. Richie & Amy met in high school



through BBYO and started dating in college.

Jacob & Kendra Asher joined OT because of its many active young families and its moderate and open atmosphere. Their children are Henry and Mirabell.

**David Dubin** loves the warm and inviting community at OT. He grew up in Charlotte and moved to Northern Virginia, in July 2012, when he got a government job as a geographer.

Rochelle Friedman lived in many places around the country. She returned to the area last December to be close to her children and grandchildren. Family and friends drew her to OT.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 10** 

# **MAZAL TOV TO**

Stefanie Schwartz & Dan Blacker, on the engagement of their daughter, Rachel, to Daniel Fields

Melissa & Avi Golub and Zohar & Mark Golub, on the birth of their daughter and granddaughter,

Francine Lasken, on the birth of her grandson, Caden Lasken, son of Jonathan Lasken & Diana Vielocha Daniel McCabe, on receiving his yad award

Yana Chernyak & Kyle O'Donnell, on the birth of their son, Moshe Sharon & Jeremy Pederson, on the naming of their daughter, Lyla

Ashley & Nissim Vazana, on the birth of their daughter, Amalia Marie

## ANNIVERSARIES

Anniversary donations support Shabbat Kiddush lunch at Olam Tikvah. The following people made donations in honor of their anniversaries:

#### **October Anniversaries**

October 1-6: Andrea & Greg Fabian; Karen & Josef Gurian; Julie & Ken Lifland: Rachel & Ed Shnekendorf: Michelle & Steven Stravitz October 7-13: Marnie & Howard

Fienberg (20); Ellyn & Todd Fine

(20); Rochelle & David Goldberg; Sara & Leonard Heimowitz; Nogah & Rob Helfant

October 14-20: Julie Silberger & Tor Aschan: Marci & Alan Benheim: Melissa Hill Jones & Eric Jones: Hilah & Joshua Kaufman (10); Eileen & Norman Leshan; Roz Sloan & Art Levine; Ev & Joel Paul (50); Bonnie & Michael Witlin

October 21-27: Debby Swichkow & Raymond Ellis; Patricia & Bruce Gordon (25); Andrea & Jerry Gross; Melinda & Mark Roth; Beth & Ronald Siebert; Alison & Joshua Stern

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 11** 

#### **NEW MEMBERS CON'T**

Steven & Lila Goldstein love the active community at OT. They moved here from New Jersey a year ago to be close to their children.

Efrat & Eyal Moses both grew up in Israel, and moved here for work. You might know Efrat because she teaches at OTRS, but she also works for the State Department. Eyal is an engineer with the America Institute of Education.

Bahar Salimova grew up in Azerbaijan, moved to Israel in the '90s and met her husband Andy Baxter after she moved to the U.S. She works for the World Bank, and Andy is an attorney for the General Council PC. Their kids, Eytan, Ronen, Noam and **Benjamin,** attend Mantua Elementary and Frost Middle School, and the family enjoys music and movies.

Randy & Leslie Siegel joined OT because it was recommended by a number of their friends. They met in high school and will soon be celebrating 20 years of marriage. Their children are Levi, Nathaniel and Shoshana.

Emily Smith grew up in Northern Virginia and is a Virginia Tech alum. She's the Communications Director for the International Union of Bricklavers and Allied Craftworkers. When she's not attending Shabbat services with her daughter, you can find her at a museum, winery, softball game or outdoors (just NOT camping).

Judit Illes & Jeff Waksman joined OT after their recent marriage. Born in Budapest, Judit grew up in Montreal. Jeff is from Westchester. They love that OT is welcoming and has members spanning the decades. They look forward to deepening their Jewish learning, and meeting people through clubs and volunteering.

OT's vibrant, active, and friendly environment, and its unique approach to religious school education is why Richard & Hannah Whiteside and their children, Jeremy, Evie and Colin, joined OT.

Please welcome additional new member families!

Hannah McBride & Chris Bull.







plus Eli, Jack and Noah

- · Daniel Grey & Rachel Cohen
- · Emily & David Mallen, plus Eli and Flora
- Linda Mitchell (rejoined)
- · Elizabeth & Josh Weisman, plus **Riley and Quinn**
- · Adena & Steve Levy, plus Samara, Saniyah, Aylah and **Styles**



# B'NEI MITZVAH



NOVEMBER 12, 2022 Parshat: Vayera

# BENJI RAPHAEL

Son of Ross & Sharon Raphael and sibling to Mila, Benji is an eighth grader at Franklin Middle School. He enjoys soccer, football and snacking and has been a member of the Olam Tikvah family for 8 years.

Bar Mitzvah Project: Benji's Bar Mitzvah project is collecting sports equipment for Leveling the Playing Field, which redistributes equipment to expand access and equity within youth sports and recreation programs in under-resourced communities.

Learn more about b'nei mitzvah projects and how you can support them at:



## MISHPACHA CON'T

October 28-31: Suzanne & Joseph Rubinstein; Shari & Sidney Schwartz; Michelle & Zachary Silberman

#### **November Anniversaries**

November 1-3: Sheila & Bruce Levine November 4-10: Kendra & Jacob Asher (5); Marilynne & Steven Specht; Fraida & Alan Zusman November 11-17: Barbra & Arnold Golub: Laura & Seth Herz (25): Miriam & Albert Pinto; Beverly & Norman Polmar (60); Beth & Barry Reisig; Jamie & Andrew Schiffman November 18-24: Jen & Hugh Halpern; Rachel & Benjamin Hofstatter (15); Shana Weiss & Coleman Sachs (40) November 25-30: Eileen & George Billinson; Shelly & Fred Kerman; Brenda & Marvin Klemow; Elizabeth & Peter Maer (50); Valerie & Jeffrey Rubin

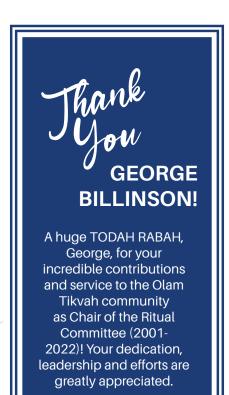
# IN MEMORY OF

Max Chapman Harris Dienstfrey, brother of Steve Dienstfrey Abram Feldner Anita Fischer, mother of Lorraine Fischer Beatrice Flynn, mother of Dale Rolfe Alan Hahn, husband of Joan Hahn Charles (Chuck) Hershkowitz, father of Shari Schwartz

Will Rieger, father of Barry Rieger Melinda Robins, daughter of Rona & Alan Moshell

Nadine Rosen, wife of Irwin Rosen Don Sacarob, husband of Joan Sacarob

Celebrate with us! Help us expand the Mishpacha section for a variety of simchas—all ages, all experiences. Send your ideas or announcements to communications@olamtikvah.org.



Get a Mitzvah Shoutout! Would you like to include your own Mazel Tov for a mitzvah? Thank someone who went above and beyond? Donate \$18 for a 2-line announcement in the Contemporary! Contact Melissa Benson at Mbenson@olamtikvah.org to get started.





# CHANUKAH AT OT

The Festival of Lights is a time of getting together at OT for games! We look forward to making new memories this year with you and your families. Get ready for this year's event on December 10, a Pre-Chanukah Extravaganza featuring the game show sensation Who Knows One?

PHOTOS (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT): Family Chanukah Celebration 2019 (PHOTO BY ERIN DREYFUSS); The Great Chanukah Relay Games of 2014 (PHOTO BY DAN NOBLE); Chanukah Gelt Games of 2021 (PHOTO BY DAN NOBLE)





# VIRGINIA IS FOR ISRAEL L O E R S

# THANK YOU

Congregation Olam Tikvah, for your love of Israel and your investment in our IDF soldiers!

# **JOIN US!**



April 19-27, 2023 From Holocaust to Independence -Poland Israel Mission

Powerful experience in Poland alongside soldiers and survivors, Be in Israel for the 75<sup>th</sup> Yom HaAtzmaut, meet President Herzog, and much more!

# **INVEST WITH US!**

\$5,000 Annually sends an IDF Veteran to university (IMPACT! Scholarship, 4 yr commitment) - Develop a personal relationship with your soldier

\$3,600 Builds a leisure corner on an IDF base. We'll help arrange a base visit during your next trip to Israel!

\$1,300 Sponsors a Lone Soldier's flight home









# THE IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTEERISM

BY GEORGE D. BILLINSON

As Jews, volunteerism is practically a part of our DNA. Volunteerism can take the form of financial contributions, but contributions of time and effort are equally important.

One of the earliest examples of volunteerism can be found in the Torah. Following the revelation at Sinai, God directs the Israelites to construct the Mishkan (Tabernacle) as a sanctuary so that God "may dwell among them." (Exodus 25:8). The Mishkan was constructed entirely from gifts brought voluntarily by the Israelites: "Thus the Israelites, all the men and women whose hearts moved them to bring anything for the work that the Lord, through Moses, had commanded to be done, brought it as a freewill offering to the Lord. (Exodus 35:29).

As Rabbi Mordechai Kaplan (*z"l*) the founder of the Reconstructionist movement, wrote, "[t]he worship of God, though desirable as an end itself, can somehow never be in the right spirit, unless it impels one to the service of man." We see this

concept play out every day at Olam Tikvah. Our commitment to worship translates into serving others in so many ways. Although there are far too many examples to list all of them, here are just a few.

What leaps to mind is the critical roles our officers, board members. and committee members play in serving our community. I would certainly be remiss if I failed to mention the many contributions of Sisterhood and Men's Club. Our service leaders, Torah and Haftarah readers, Shammoses, Gabbayim, young people who assist in children's services, those who serve on the Chevra Kadisha, and those who support our daily minyan exemplify how we translate worship of God into service of community. I am also reminded of those who put together those wonderful Mishloach Manot bags to not only help us fulfill the mitzvah of giving gifts at Purim, ensuring that everyone feels connected.

Volunteerism benefits both the

PHOTO BY DAN NOBLE
George Billinson volunteered for
more than 20 years as OT Ritual Chair,
ensuring our holidays run smoothly.
Here he is with the rabbis at Purim.

community and the volunteer. As Rabbi Harold Kushner wrote, "When you are kind to others, it not only changes you, it changes the world." As we read in Proverbs 11:25, "[a] generous person enjoys prosperity; one who satisfies others shall themselves be sated."

Volunteerism furthers the personal connection to others in the community, which is so important particularly in trying times. There is also a special sense of fulfillment that comes from volunteering and helping others. My experience as long time Ritual Chair has given me the incredible opportunity to connect with many congregants and to help offer them a meaningful prayer experience. I have always enjoyed working with our B'nei Mitzvah families on their special day, and I have found working with our young people, as they take their place as service leaders, to be particularly rewarding.

Seek out volunteer opportunities that speak to you. You won't regret it



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# **OLAM TIKVAH CONNECTIONS**

OT is a dynamic community, with multiple events for every age group throughout the month. We stay in touch with you in the following ways:



# **On-Demand at Olamtikvah.org**

Go to our website for our calendar and the latest from committees and the OT Religious School. Sign up to participate in virtual and in-person events, adult education classes and our online directory in the members-only section.

#### In Your Inbox

This Week at OT - OT-wide announcements every Friday morning

# **Special Communications by Email**

Holiday announcements & Baruch Dayan Ha'Emet (Condolences)

# **The Contemporary Magazine**

Thoughtful articles come to you every other month

Looking to write an article or contribute? Contact us at communications@olamtikvah.org.