



CONGREGATION  
B'NAI TIKVAH

# TIKVAH TALK

October/November 2019

Walnut Creek, CA

Vol. 39 Iss. 1

## REFLECTIONS...

By Rabbi Jennie Chabon



*Excerpt of Rabbi Chabon's Rosh Hashanah Sermon, delivered September 30, 2019*

Three years ago, on November 2016, just days after the presidential election, Amina Amdeen, a Muslim woman, and Joseph Weidknecht, a Trump supporter, both showed up to an anti-Trump rally

in Austin Texas. Amina, in her hijab, was there to protest the election, and Joseph, one of the counter-protestors, was wearing a Make America Great Again hat and holding a sign that said "proud to be deplorable." At one point, Joseph heard the click of a lighter and turned around to see three people trying to light his shirt on fire. Someone then pulled off his hat, which sparked an unexpected reaction within Amina. She felt herself rushing to defend Joseph, screaming at the protestors to leave him alone. As a Muslim woman, she herself had experienced people trying to tear her hijab off her head, and she could not tolerate someone doing that to Joseph, no matter what sign he was holding or what his hat said. Her instinct was empathy. It was hearing God speaking in the voice of this stranger, regardless of how much they disagreed with one another. That moment of empathy connected them forever because Amina and Joseph were reminded in that human exchange that we are enlarged by people who are different from us, not diminished. If we only spend time with people with whom we agree, we will lose the ability to have empathy, and hope, and the world, the horribly torn and broken world, depends entirely on us not losing our empathy.

In one of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks' most magnificent books, "The Dignity of Difference", he proposes a radical and unusual solution to the world of conflict that we find ourselves in today. His proposal? Forgiveness. We think of forgiveness as a personal act, as something we offer and receive from the people in our lives. But Rabbi Sacks suggests that forgiveness on a global level actually has the ability to save the world precisely because of how much strife and conflict surround us every day. Forgiveness, he writes, "is more than a technique of conflict resolution. It is a stunningly original strategy. In a world without forgiveness, evil begets evil, harm generates harm, and there is no way

*Continued on page 3*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Judith Barrall



I have a confession to make. I have never built a sukkah, largely because I am very bad with a hammer and nails. Nails get bent and don't even attach the wood I am attempting to join. Fingers get smashed. Blood is let; and good gracious, keep me away from saws and drills! It is bit odd, don't you think, to have a "house," if you

will, that is open to the elements; no roof for protection and one side completely open? When I was young, Sukkot was presented as a "fall harvest" holiday. That is lovely in itself. As the light shifts in its intensity and shadows elongate as we zoom into fall, I have been thinking more and more about Sukkot. I know that it is one of the three pilgrimage holidays where people would flock to the Temple in Biblical times. We light a Yizkor candle at the end of the holiday to remember our ancestors. It comes at the end of the High Holidays. It is important!

But, the sukkah...to take the time to build, actually build, a structure that does not seem like protection. Why do we do it? That is a question for our Rabbi of course, but in my mind I have a few thoughts. One is being able to see the beauty of the heavens and the stars above, while also feeling the ground beneath our feet. The commandment to build a sukkah connects the divine and the earthly harvest brilliantly. In fact, to me, the only thing that comes close in our modern world is camping or backpacking. The simplicity of such a structure makes me think of our traveling Mishkan in the desert. Up it goes, down it comes, and it is with us as we travel. We feel the wind through the walls, and yet this odd "house" provides spiritual protection and reminds us who we are.

Of course, Simchat Torah comes at the very end of Sukkot. We have just experienced the High Holidays, perhaps a bit changed. Then we unwind the Torah completely and re-roll our lovely scroll and we begin again. Isn't that a bit like our lives? We make change; we go back. When we go forward again, perhaps we can see things just a bit differently, or behave a bit differently. Whenever we journey through the Torah and the cycle of the Jewish calendar, we repeat, and yet it is new every single time. How fascinating!

If you have never celebrated Sukkot or Simchat Torah, there are opportunities this year to try something new. Please join us!

While I may not be the one with hammer and nail in hand, I will be sure to stand in our beautiful sukkah, shake the four species, gaze up at the heavens and give thanks.

At Congregation B'nai Tikvah, we believe that a kind and vibrant Jewish community deepens and restores our sense of purpose and connection to the world. We are dedicated to learning, music-infused prayer, personal relationships and a commitment to social justice, and welcome all who are looking to explore the many innovative paths to meaning that Judaism has to offer.

## STAFF

- Jennie Chabon**, Rabbi Cantor  
**Sammy Kanter**, Student Rabbi  
**Ariel Luckey**, Director of Operations  
**Keren Smith**, Director of Education  
**Tina Eisenman**, B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator  
**Kathy Jacobs**, Office Coordinator  
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**Raphael W. Asher**, Rabbi Emeritus  
**Stephen Richards**, Cantor Emeritus

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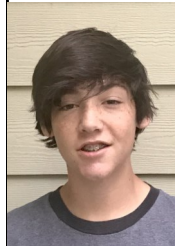
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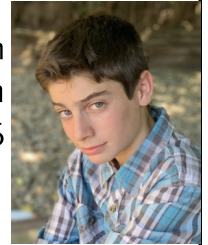
**Office Hours: M - Th 9am - 5pm, F 9am - 3pm**  
**office@tikvah.org (925) 933-5397**  
**www.tikvah.org**

## MAZEL TOV TO OUR B'NAI MITZVAH!



Bar Mitzvah of Ben Bronstone  
 Son of Madeleine & Trace Bronstone  
 Saturday, October 12

Bar Mitzvah of Daniel Smith  
 Son of Keren & Joshua Smith  
 Saturday, October 26



Bat Mitzvah of Emily Gardner  
 Daughter of Marla & Todd Gardner  
 Saturday, November 2

Bat Mitzvah of Danielle Robinson  
 Daughter of Tami & Robert Robinson  
 Granddaughter of Zaffy Welch  
 Saturday, November 9



Shabbat Services begin at 10am.  
 The Congregation is invited to attend.

*Mazel Tov to our B'nai Mitzvah  
 and their families!*

**Mazel Tov!** *To our NEWEST Grandparents!*

Debbie & Marc Usatin on the birth of their granddaughter, Juliette Madeline Usatin Solow July 13, 2019. Parents Marissa Usatin & Jered Solow

Joan Weinstein on the birth of her Granddaughter, Delta Em Weinstein, July 31, 2019. Parents Tina Kukielski & Josh Weinstein

# REFLECTIONS...

By Rabbi Jennie Chabon

*continued from page 1*

short of exhaustion or forgetfulness of breaking the sequence. Forgiveness breaks the chain. It introduces into the logic of interpersonal encounter the unpredictability of grace.” (page 179)

Grace. Chein. It was God’s grace that moved through Amina and Joseph that day, unpredictable and beautiful grace that turned an angry protest into a moment of human connection and healing. They forgave one another and changed the course of history not just for themselves, but for the witnesses to that moment as well, for their friends and family, and for strangers, like me, who heard their story. If a Trump supporter and a Muslim anti-trump activist could find a way to seeing the grace of God within one another, shouldn’t every person in our congregation be able to do that as well? Shouldn’t every feuding family member, every person who disagrees about how to love Israel or how to be a proud American, shouldn’t we all be able to find our way to forgiveness too?

We are in a time of great turning. In the world, in the broader Jewish community, and in our own synagogue, it is a time of transformation, a time of upholding what is most beautiful, and a time of creativity and imagination. As we navigate this change, we must resist the desire to cling to who we think we “should” be and instead focus our vision on how we can soar and thrive. There is staggering beauty in the diversity of humanity, and I invite you, as partners on this journey, to join me as we seek out the holy in unexpected people, as we love and honor the stranger sitting next to us, and above all, as we lead with love and grace and forgiveness through it all.



Shabbat in the Park, September 2019

# RELIGIOUS SCHOOL NEWS

By Keren Smith, Director of Education



Shalom families,

I recently went to the top of Mount Diablo with my husband, Josh, and our youngest daughter, Amalia, for a stargazing program offered by the Astronomical Society of Mt. Diablo, it was absolutely spectacular! Amalia has taken a real interest in the night sky, and I thought it would be nice for us to honor her curiosity and take her to this program. Little did I know that this would easily become the best evening of my summer, just looking at the sky with my family (at least the part of it that still values family time). There was something so captivating in standing at top of a mountain, watching the sun disappear on the horizon, the shadow of the earth turning over itself bringing nighttime, and a full moon rising in the east. It struck me how just slowing down our pace makes looking at something so ordinary and commonplace such a powerful experience.

This moment of awe got me thinking about how wonderful it is to experience gratitude, and how accessible this feeling is if we only dedicate the time to it. Letting our hearts fill with gratitude allows us to gain perspective, and see the world through a positive lens. The Jewish tradition provides with ample occasions designed to intentionally insert gratitude into our lives. In our tradition each morning as we wake up we are to say Mode Ani, “I am thankful”. It doesn’t matter how tired we might feel, what type of a night sleep we had, or how busy the day is in front of us; the first thought we are to have in the morning is that of gratitude, with the hope that the great feeling that accompanies that thought enters our heart. How wonderful would it be if we actually filled our heart with gratitude every morning? Started each day with a positive outlook of how lucky and privileged we are.

Similarly, there is a blessing for gratitude called *Shehekheyanu*, which is said around new experiences. It is said each Holiday on the first day, when you buy something new, or heard great news. The words are ברוך אתה יי, אלוהינו מלך העולם, שהחיינו, וקימנו והגיעמו לזמן הזה. Translated to English it means: “Blessed are you God, ruler of the universe, who has granted us life and sustained us and enabled us to reach this occasion”.

On Rosh Hashanah, there is a special tradition of gratitude as we welcome the new year: saying the *shehekheyanu* on a new piece of fruit. This new piece of fruit can either be a fruit you have not yet eaten this season, like a pomegranate, or for an extra challenge a piece of fruit

*Continued on page 4*

# SISTERHOOD NEWS

By Rayna Ravitz, President

I hope to see many of you at the membership brunch on Sunday, October 13th, which is free to all Sisterhood members and new CBT members. If you haven't joined Sisterhood by October 13, you can join that morning. Our Book Sister regular meeting is normally on the third Tuesday of the month. We'll get back on schedule in October. We're always looking for book recommendations and ideas for activities.

For the Wednesday night Mah Jong schedule, contact Beth Riseman at [bethrise@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bethrise@sbcglobal.net). If you are interested in an afternoon game, contact Barbara Grossman at [bsgasg@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bsgasg@sbcglobal.net).

If you are not receiving emails from me with updates usually twice a month, please email your address to [raynaravitz@gmail.com](mailto:raynaravitz@gmail.com)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Sisterhood Membership Brunch at CBT Sunday, October 13th– 12:30pm

Come for a catered brunch in our Social Hall, Meet new members; greet old friends. Bring books you want to pass along. We would love to hear your programming ideas. All new CBT members are complimentary Sisterhood members. RSVP by October 6

### Book Sisters at CBT

Tuesday, October 15 - 6:30pm

"Before we were yours" by Lisa Wingate  
Marilyn will lead the discussion.  
Potluck dinner, bring dairy or vegetarian items

### Book Sisters at CBT

Tuesday, November 19 – 7:00pm

Rabbi Lee Bycle will discuss his new book "Refugees in America". This is a joint meeting with CCJCC Under One Tent program. Everyone is invited



## RELIGIOUS SCHOOL NEWS CONTINUED

Continued from page 3

you never tried. In my family, we have a lot of fun looking for fruits we never tried before, which often results in a trip to 99 Ranch, where they have an amazing variety of uncommon fruit. I urge you this year to take advantage of this tradition, eat a new fruit, and fill your heart with gratitude for being alive and well in the new year and for the privilege of experiencing something new.

Wishing you and your family a Shana Tova, a happy new year filled with gratitude.



## WANT TO LEARN MAH JONG?

**Join us!** Mah Jong pros, Rayna Ravitz and her friends, have kindly offered to teach us newbies on Sunday mornings while our kiddos are in class!

**WHO:** Religious School parents & anyone who wants to learn!

**WHEN:** November 10th and November 17th, 10am

**WHERE:** CBT Youth Lounge (downstairs)

Please RSVP to [aslavet@gmail.com](mailto:aslavet@gmail.com) so that we have the proper number of teachers. Coffee and pastries will be provided.

**WE WELCOME  
OUR NEWEST MEMBERS  
TO THE  
B'NAI TIKVAH FAMILY!**

VANESSA ABRAMOV

LORI & MAX AUFFENHAMMER

VIKKI BEARMAN & SCOTT ARGANEK

BRANDI & CHAZ BERMAN

DEBORAH BRAUNSTEIN & ANDY SEABERG

JESSICA & JOEL BRODIE

NAIOMI STEIN-COOPER & GENE COOPER

PAM FENENBOCK

ALIZA & EYAL GOLSHANI

JOANNA & BENJAMIN GROSSMAN

AMY HIRSH & ADAM HOLTZMAN

LISA & LOUIS HIRSH

MICHELLE & TED HOCHSTEIN

FIONNA & JEREMY KUNIYOSHI

KATIE & JOSH LEVINE

HELENE NEHREBECKI

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SUSAN & MARK PETERS

MONICA PINSEL

SARAH & JOSH ROSENTHAL

SHELDON SCHWARTZ & THELMA BRONET

THRITTIMA & PAUL SHERER

SUSAN & MICHAEL SMITH

SARAH & NATE STRATTON

KATIE & JOE TENENBAUM

KEREN & ADAM TORMAN

CAROLYN & ERIC WEINER

EMILY WEINSTEIN

IRENE & RON ZELMAN

ASHLEY HAUGER & JEFF ZWEIG



**with Rabbi Chabon**

Join us for fun, interactive and informative learning sessions on a wide range of Jewish topics.

Bring a brown bag lunch! 12-1pm

**Tuesdays, Nov 12th & 26th**

**Dec 10th**



Join Rabbi Chabon in the Social Hall right after Tfilah at 10am for a short talk and a light breakfast. Each session will highlight a different topic for a little bite of wisdom.

Bites of Wisdom provides a great opportunity for you to meet new people, all while enjoying bagel & coffee and learning something new.

This program is free and open to anyone - please come join us.

**Select Sundays at 10am**

October 13th, 2019

November 3rd, 2019

December 8th, 2019

# UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Introducing...

## FEAST

### An Artisanal Shabbat Event

with Rabbi Jennie Chabon

& Chef Aliza Grayevsky Somekh

**Friday, November 22, 2019, 6pm**

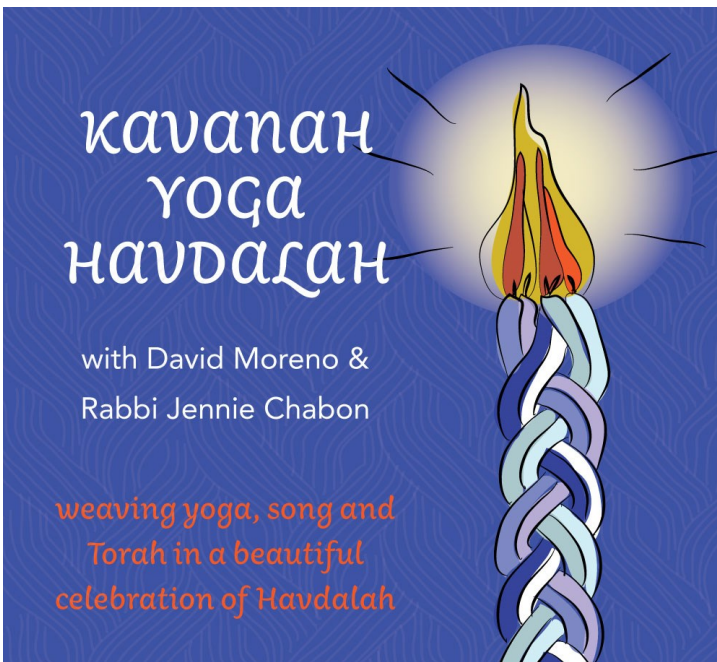
A Delicious Multi-Course Shabbat Meal with  
Drinks, Live Music & Jewish Teaching

**Tickets available at [www.tikvah.org](http://www.tikvah.org).**



FEAST will feature a multi-course meal by Chef Aliza Grayevsky Somekh, a local chef who specializes in contemporary Israeli cuisine that combines her mother's recipes with flavors of California, and live music and Jewish teachings by renowned singer Rabbi Jennie Chabon. Layering elements of tradition and innovation, food and music, entertainment and education, **FEAST will delight your senses and feed your soul.**

This FEAST is a celebration of Sephardic Judaism, a highly diverse and tradition-rich part of the great Jewish family tree, with culture and foods that are deeply rooted in the countries where the Jews who were expelled from Spain in 1492 found new homes. We invite you to join us for dinner, in an evening that will take you on a journey between Sephardic Jewish flavors from Greece, Turkey, Italy and the region of Northern Africa. Each delicious dish will tell part of the story of one of the most formative episodes in Jewish history. FEAST is sponsored in part by a generous grant from the Contra Costa Jewish Community Center.



**First Saturdays, 7-9pm**

**10/5, 11/2, 12/7**

**Drop in Class, \$20-36 Sliding Scale**



Join Senior Yoga Instructor David Moreno and Rabbi Jennie Chabon for a contemplative and playful participatory evening of yoga, chanting and reflection. We will breathe, move and celebrate Havdalah together. This is ideal for people with some yoga experience. Please wear comfortable clothes and bring a yoga mat and your favorite props if you have them. Some mats will be available.

More info at [www.tikvah.org](http://www.tikvah.org).

# SERVICES AT CBT



## Celebrate Simchat Torah with B'nai Tikvah!

**Sunday, October 20th**

**5:00pm**, Join us for a delicious community dinner

**5:45pm** We will start a beautiful Simchat Torah Service and consecrate all our new Religious School students.

**7:00pm** Stay after service for dessert & dancing with the Torah for extra fun!

## Family First Fridays at CBT

**October 4th & November 1st**

**5:30-6pm Tot Shabbat Service**

A warm, playful service full of songs, stories and simple prayers perfect for children 5 and under.

**6:30-7:15pm Family Shabbat**

A fun, family-friendly service with interactive stories, prayers and melodies religious school children will recognize and everyone will enjoy. Family Shabbat Service on Oct 4th will feature our 1st Grade Students

Family Shabbat Service on Nov 1st will feature a special 'Smore Shabbat oneg!



## Shir Joy Shabbat

Join Rabbi Chabon & the Shir Joy Band for a joyous Shabbat service featuring live music, song & prayer.

**Friday, October 18th, 7:30pm**

**Friday, November 15th, 7:30pm**



Come snack and schmooze at our

## Sip & Mingle Socials

7pm Before Shir Joy Shabbat Services

Join us for  
**Oneg in the Sukkah**  
Friday, October 18th after  
Shir Joy Shabbat

# CONTRIBUTIONS

## GENERAL FUND

In memory of Max Sheldon  
*Christine & Murray Sheldon*

In memory of Tim Teele  
*Jackie Chakoff*

In memory of Isobel Dvorsky  
*Rayna & Richard Ravitz*  
*Paula & Mike Weintraub*

In loving memory of Mel Weinstein with deep gratitude to my CBT family for all the love and support during our difficult Times.  
*Joan Weinstein and family*

In honor of Rayna Ravitz' Birthday  
*Chanel & Tracy Benhamou*  
*Margie Farber, Venice FL*  
*Beth Riseman*

In memory of Chester Tobias  
*Carol & Allan Tobias*

In memory of Kay Bernstein Tucker  
*Dale Tucker*

In memory of Sandra Abel  
*Kelly Boone*

In memory of Harriet Gardner  
In memory of Sadie Teitelman  
*Carol Teitelman*

In memory of Sam Blumberg  
*Alvin Trepper*

In memory of Lisa Gewing  
*Anna & Walter Gewing*

In memory of Harry Rabiner  
In memory of Richard Katz  
*Karen Lapin*

In memory of Arnold Devins  
In memory of Florence Weinstein  
*Joan Weinstein*

In memory of Hilda DeLowe  
*Judi & Larry DeLowe*

In memory of Don Arenfeld  
*Joy Lerner*

In memory of Marni Levine  
In memory of Geraldine Berres  
In memory of Jerome Berres  
*Kimberly & Brian Zagon*

In appreciation of CBT  
*The CBT Bridge Group*

In memory of Harry J. Schwartz  
In memory of Sylvia Schwartz  
*Joan & Richard Schwartz*

## RABBI CHABON'S

### DISCRETIONARY FUND

In honor of Rabbi Chabon's ordination  
*Juleen & Dan Lapporte*

In honor of Isaiah's conversion  
*Joshua Bevitz*

In memory of Hannah Roth and Sarah Brown  
*Sharon & Ron Brown*

In memory of Star Kaplan  
*Iris Kaplan*

## EMERITUS RABBI ASHER'S

### DISCRETIONARY FUND

In gratitude for your guidance during our loss and the meaningful memorial service in Mel's memory.  
*Joan Weinstein and family*

In appreciation of Rabbi Asher reading from the Torah at Calla's Bat Mitzvah  
*Paula & Mike Weintraub*

## CANTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

In memory of William Tama  
*Sharon & Hugh Tama*

In memory of Ben Brown  
*Sharon & Ron Brown*

## CANTOR'S MUSIC FUND

In memory of Toni Levyn  
*Terri & Brent Waterman*

In honor of Rayna Ravitz's birthday  
*Cookie Svingos*

In memory of Isobel Dvorsky and in appreciation of Rabbi Chabon  
*Kathy & Steve Weiner*

## CANTOR STEPHEN RICHARDS CHOIR FUND

In memory of Stephanie Woldman & Myron Woldman  
In memory of Adele Morse Platt  
In memory of Kevin Platt  
In memory of Ruth Ellis Wise  
*Cantor Stephen & Marjorie Richards*

In memory of Dave Appleberg  
*Idelle Lipman*

## STEPHEN JASPAN RELIGIOUS SCHOOL FUND

In memory of Isobel Dvorsky  
*Donna & Mike Greenberg*

## ABRAHAM NIVER SCHOLARSHIP FUND

In memory of Regina Deutsch  
*Judy & Walt Blum*

## MORDOH/NADJARI HOLOCAUST FUND

In memory of Isobel Dvorsky  
*Zaffy Welch*  
*Marilyn Fleiss*

## RODEF SHALOM SECURITY FUND

Happy Birthday Rayna!  
*Zaffy Welch*

In memory of Jacob Goldstein  
*Estelle Goldstein*

In appreciation  
*Mona Epstein*

## SOCIAL ACTION FUND

In memory of Isobel Dvorsky

In honor of Rabbi Chabon completing studies  
In memory of Sandy McReynolds  
*Vic & Diane Leventhal*  
In memory of Esther Rappoport  
*Cookie Svingos*

## HELP THE MORTGAGE FUND

In appreciation of CBT  
*Leah Eskenazi*

In honor of Rayna Ravitz' Birthday  
*Susan Friedman*  
*Phyllis Ruderman*





# SPECIAL PROGRAMS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE **JCC** contra costa

## **The Rising Tide of Anti-Semitism in France (and what it means for us)**



**French Journalist Marc Weitzmann  
In Conversation with Assoc. Professor  
Ethan Katz**

**Sunday, November 3rd, 7pm—8pm**

Award-winning journalist Marc Weitzmann's latest book, *HATE: The Rising Tide of anti-Semitism in France (and what it means for us)*, explores the marked increase in anti-Jewish sentiment in France and its implications for America. Dr. Katz is an Associate Professor in Jewish Studies at UC Berkeley.

Pre-admission: \$5; At-the-door: \$10. Students 21 and under free. **Purchase tickets at [underonetent.org](http://underonetent.org)**

Sponsors: Contra Costa JCC, Congregation B'nai Tikvah & American Jewish Committee.

## **Israel & The World: Economics & Politics with Israeli Consul General Shlomi Kafman**



**Thursday, October 24, 7:30 pm at CBT**

Israeli Consul General to the Pacific Northwest Shlomi Kofman will present an overview of Israel's position in the world today. Over the course of his 20 year diplomatic career, he has served as Israel's Deputy consul General in New York, Chief of Staff to ambassadors in Washington D.C., Deputy Ambassador in Thailand, and Deputy Consul General in Shanghai.

Pre-admission: \$7, At the Door: \$10.

Students 21 and under are free

RSVP to [underonetent@hotmail.com](mailto:underonetent@hotmail.com) and a photo ID requested for admission.

**Purchase tickets at [UnderOneTent.org](http://UnderOneTent.org).**

## **Refugees in America:**

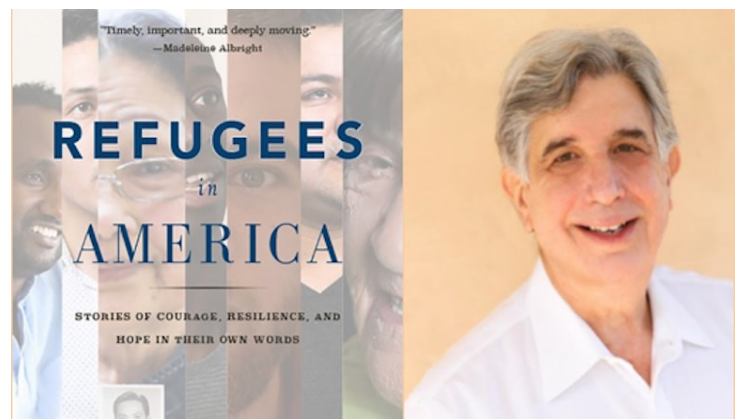
**WITH RABBI LEE BYCEL**

**STORIES OF COURAGE, RESILIENCE AND HOPE**

**Tuesday, November 19th, 7:00pm**

It's not an easy road — but hope is the oxygen of my life. These insightful words of Meron Semedar, a refugee from Eritrea, reflect the feelings of the eleven men and women featured in this powerfully moving book by Rabbi Lee Bycel. These refugees share their extraordinary experiences of fleeing oppression, violence, and war in their home countries in search of a better life in the United States.

**Admission is free and open to the public.**



## Interested in joining a Havurah?!

A Havurah is a group of like-minded people and families to socialize and share holidays with. CBT is relaunching our Havurah program!

To learn more, check out [www.tikvah.org/engage/havurah](http://www.tikvah.org/engage/havurah)

## Looking for a Calendar?

Get the latest updates, event information and clergy reflections on our website.

[www.tikvah.org](http://www.tikvah.org)



## Get a personalized Simcha Brick or Tree of Life Leaf!

A beautiful way to honor a special person, event or memory and support your synagogue at the same time.

\$360 for members

\$540 for the community

Contact [office@tikvah.org](mailto:office@tikvah.org).



# BLOOD DRIVE



Make every day awesome

## Congregation B'nai Tikvah Blood Drive

**SUNDAY, OCT. 27**  
**9:00 AM - 1:30 PM**  
**BLOODMOBILE**  
**25 HILLCROFT WAY**  
**WALNUT CREEK, CA 94597**

Blood Centers of the Pacific is now Vitalant.

To schedule your appointment please visit [vitalant.org](http://vitalant.org) and click donate. Use your unique sponsor code: CBT  
Questions contact: Alison Negrin at [chefalison@gmail.com](mailto:chefalison@gmail.com)

 **GIVE BLOOD TODAY | [vitalant.org](http://vitalant.org)**  
Eligibility questions? Call 877.258.4825

**vitalant**



CBT

## 2019-2020 B'nai Tikvah Shabbat Oneg Sign Up

It is a **Mitzvah** and a long-standing tradition and requirement at B'nai Tikvah for each member household to participate in hosting an oneg for Shabbat once a year. This is a great opportunity to greet and get to know your fellow congregants. As a host, you are **welcoming people as you would into your own home**; greeting people as they come into the social hall and spreading the warmth of the B'nai Tikvah community. By hosting an oneg you are serving as a leader of your CBT family.

Please sign up for an oneg online at SignUp Genius. You can also find the link in our weekly email newsletter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call the Temple Office. We are happy to assist you!

Please **sign up for an oneg by October 19th** or you will be billed \$75 on Nov 1st.



### Get Delicious Challah from Tal's Patisserie and Support CBT!

Get your Challah, Chocolate Babka, Apricot, and Chocolate Rugelach delivered fresh to CBT every Friday. Choose specific weeks or all weeks and simplify your Shabbat!

Fill out a form, (either from the weekly email, or at CBT) and drop it with a check for your order before Thursday morning of the week you want the goods. Pickup is in the afternoon each Friday.



### Team Trivia Night

Saturday, November 16, 2019

Doors open @ 6:15pm. Play starts @ 7:00pm.  
*100 fun, brain-challenging questions*  
Entry fee \$250\* per team; teams of 8 players  
Forms available at CBT Office.

### Looking for a good book?

Visit the newly organized **CBT library** AND search the collection **ONLINE!** A link is on the CBT Website "Learn" tab:

<https://tikvah.org/learn/>  
Scroll to the bottom of the page

### Come play Mahjong at CBT!

On the 2nd & 4th Wednesdays at 7pm.  
On the 4th Thursdays at 1-3:30pm.



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### Our 22nd Annual Restaurant Walk A Taste of Walnut Creek was a huge success!

A very special thank you to  
Lori Siegel,  
our Fundraising Chair extraordinaire!  
Thanks to all the participating restaurants, our community partners and everyone who helped make it happen.

See you next year!



## **TIKVAH MEANS HOPE**

From the blog of  
Harry Wittenberg,  
Past President

I've had a credo for a long time that guided my actions: "I live to serve." Helping others and trying to add meaning to my life was important to me. I consciously followed a basic tenet of Judaism called Tikkun Olam, translated means to repair the world and leave it better than you found it. I started volunteering in high school at a state institution for severely disabled adults. Some of you may remember Willowbrook, the state institution whose exposure made Geraldo Rivera famous. The conditions were horrific. I'll never forget walking into a ward where a number of residents were walking around naked, peeing on the floor, no tables or chairs, no games or books, and the employees sitting in a room separated by a window looking into the room. Though at the time it seemed our work was futile, I still felt I was making a difference. That experience led me to a career in special education with which I taught for a number of years. After moving to California, I went into corporate learning and development. I still found meaning in my work but felt I needed to do something for a broader community. Besides volunteering for political campaigns, I started volunteering at my temple, called Congregation B'nai Tikvah. Tikvah means hope. I started by rejuvenating the brotherhood group. Then I followed my passion and started a house band we called the Tikvah Tones. Though that work was satisfying, it wasn't until I joined the board at Holden high school that I felt I could make a difference. Holden is an alternative school for adolescents who were failing the public education system. My oldest son was one of those kids. We were a bit desperate when we found Holden. They worked miracles with him as with all of their students. My son got his diploma and continued his education. Since then I referred a few others to Holden, all who did very well. I was so grateful to the school, I wanted to pay it forward. I joined their board of trustees at a time of financial challenges for them. After a year or so, I became board president for a number of tough financial years. Those

years were gratifying even though I felt we were often on the verge of closure due to low enrollment. Unfortunately during my watch I wasn't able to make a big difference on the fiduciary side, but I believe I at least kept a vision and sense of hope alive. Now, seven years later, there is full enrollment with a waiting list and they are financially healthy.

By paying it forward, sometimes you don't get to see what your labors produce in the short term. I read about the first Peace Corps volunteers in Nepal. A few of them planted some apple trees in the hope they propagate. Well, 50 years later, apple orchards are everywhere.

After Holden, I went on to become the president of the board of my temple, B'nai Tikvah. The name means Community of Hope. As president, I had the privilege of helping our rabbi of 33 years retire and hire a new one. I also presided over a shrinking membership and reduced revenue. I tried new approaches to fundraising, focusing the board's attention on innovative ways to bring new members, and above all, keep a sense of hope for the future. It's a tough job to take on, given the constant demands by different people who have their opinions of how to run a temple. I used to joke at the temple blood drive that I have no more blood to give so good luck finding any in me. But all told, it was a labor of love. I cared about the community and they cared right back. Now four years later, I'm getting back so much more than I gave. Since my diagnosis, the love that has come from the community has been incredible. I didn't know what difference I made until sometime after when congregants I hardly knew would come over to me at services to provide wonderful feedback.

Paying forward has really reaped such incredible benefits for me. It's all the more sweet because I never had any expectations for return. My passion was to serve, which was my reward. Everything else is alchemy, turning my desire into gold. This is how I worship and live my faith.

**Read more at [www.harrywittenberg.com](http://www.harrywittenberg.com).**

# CONTRA COSTA MIDRASHA

By Devra C. Aarons, CCM Director

Dear Community Friends,

Midrasha's opening weeks have been truly magnificent! We have a community of [almost] 100 teens joining us each Wednesday night. Our crew of amazing staff or "mentsch-a-cators" continue to inspire me and our teens every week. Have you heard me use this term? This portmanteau phrase aims to combine two important ideas we hold at Midrasha. For one, the staff who work with our teens on Wednesday nights and retreats are not just educators imparting knowledge (though this is part of their job), they are mentors and guides. Whether in weekly "check-in" or in electives, our staff aim to enable our teens to find their own Jewish identity. This is based on idea #2 - being mentsch models or "doogma," the Hebrew word for role model. Our staff show rather than tell our teens about Jewish identity by living it or as our teens have said, "I admire how [insert staff name here] is unapologetically Jewish." Our Midrasha team teaches through mentorship, modeling and warmth.

This Fall and Winter continues not only Wednesday nights, but also our special projects:

Retreats! November 1-3, CCM teens join with teens from Berkeley/Oakland for a Shabbat weekend in the Santa Cruz mountains. These two-day adventures enable our teens to experience Shabbat as a teen community, growing friendships, celebrating Havdalah with excellent song leader Eric Schoen and enjoying nature.

Hamsa Fund's Teen Philanthropy Board begins its fifth year enabling teens to make change in the world today. This group (almost entirely teen run) operates through consensus decision making to pick an issue, fundraise for it and then giving grants to relevant non-profit organizations. Find out more: [ccmidrasha.com/hamsa-fund](http://ccmidrasha.com/hamsa-fund)

Mifgash means encounter - for our American-Jewish teens and Israeli teens to connect, build relationships and learn about each other's communities and Judaism. This Winter CCM staff and teens will travel to Israel for a week of adventures with our partners from the Mosenson High School in Hod HaSharon, Israel. Info at: [ccmidrasha.com/mifgash5780](http://ccmidrasha.com/mifgash5780).

It's hard to believe but our Shinshin, Noa Galansky has been with us now for two months! Here's her

assessment of her opening time with us: I've had the most amazing two months in the community, learning so many new things every day, and getting to know this wonderful community and amazing people and families. I'm glad I had the chance to meet B'nai Tikvah and Midrasha's teens, and do a lot of fun and activities that have helped them understand and connect to through culture and people, such as elections day, activity about the life as a teen in Israel and as a teen in the US, and even making Israeli food! We need your help! Please let us know if you can host Noa for 2-4 months in 2020.

Save the Date for our "Masquerade Gala 2020" at the Blackhawk Country Club!

Registration for 2019-20 at Midrasha is now OPEN! Sign up using the "ENROLL" button at [www.ccmidrasha.com](http://www.ccmidrasha.com)!

For more information about any of our programs or to RSVP for an upcoming program, visit us at: [www.ccmidrasha.com](http://www.ccmidrasha.com) or drop me a line at 925/944-4701 or my NEW e-mail address - [devra.aarons@ccmidrasha.com](mailto:devra.aarons@ccmidrasha.com).



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