



Tikvah Talk

May-July 2021

Walnut Creek, CA

Vol. 40 Iss. 2

Reflections...

By Rabbi Jennie Chabon



Friends,
For the past several weeks, I have been following the trial of Derek Chauvin, listening to the testimonies of both medical experts and George Floyd's family members, with the hope that perhaps, maybe, this time,

the arc of the moral universe will indeed bend toward justice. At the time of this writing, I am feeling hopeful about the outcome.

I was in the car, listening to an update when I heard the term "spark of life witness" for the first time. What a strange way of describing someone's job on the stand, to verify that the victim had a soul beyond their physical body. Most states do not allow spark of life witnesses to testify because they are believed to be prejudicial, but Minnesota is an exception. This exception feels particularly important today, in 2021, when so many of us are learning through our racial justice work that one of the most effective ways of combating implicit bias and internalized racism is to see ourselves in the "other," to use empathy as a tool of connection and healing. "Radical empathy," says Isabel Wilkerson, "is the kindred connection from a place of deep knowing that opens your spirit to the pain of another as they perceive it." (Caste, page 386)

Here at CBT, we have always been committed to being a welcoming and inclusive community.

In recent months we have deepened that commitment by turning our attention to racial equity and racial justice. As I wrote in an email recently, this work is mind and soul-altering, hugely important, and tremendously slow. It takes both courage and humility. And most importantly, it requires Wilkerson's concept of radical empathy for us to truly transform ourselves and our beloved community into a place that welcomes all, not just the Jews who look

Continued on Page 4

President's Message

By Judith Barrall, Board President



A few weeks ago, on a splendid spring day, I was fortunate enough to attend our first in-person Shabbat service in over a year! Everybody sat masked, six feet apart, the evening chill setting in, a breeze rustling the branches of our towering oak. We

were just simply giddy with the pure JOY OF IT ALL. There are simply no other words.

For me, sitting in our very own amphitheater was powerful and magical. I have missed driving up the winding road and turning into our parking lot. I have missed the greetings of "Shabbat Shalom" coming to my ears in full surround sound. I miss the beauty of our beloved sanctuary. Whenever I set foot in our mishkan, I find that I can quiet myself in ways that are otherwise very difficult for me. I am able to set aside the outside world and even set aside my spinning thoughts for one rare, precious hour.

Over the past year, we have all needed to learn to attend services without coming to our physical beloved building on the top of the hill. We have done our best to carve out sections of our homes where we can Zoom into services. When logging on week after week, I know that I am not the only one who scrolls through every little Zoom box to get a glimpse of my fellow congregants. Seeing these faces gives me such great joy and fills me with such longing that I have not seen folks in person in so very long. There is so much that we all miss.

And yet. The miracle of the Jewish people is that we have had to adapt and remake ourselves over and over and over again. Every time, we bend, but we do not break. Our forefathers and foremothers forged their way through so many hardships. Whatever it took, they found a way. The wisdom of our people provides a road map to us, centuries upon centuries later. What difficulties did our

Continued on Page 5

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.

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Contact

The CBT office is open by appointment only.
office@tikvah.org (925) 933-5397
www.tikvah.org

Mazel Tov to our B'nai Mitzvah!



Bat Mitzvah of Cassidy Mintz
 Daughter of Beth & Jonathan Mintz
 Saturday, May 8



Bat Mitzvah of Anika Sherer
 Daughter of Thrittima & Paul Sherer
 Saturday, May 22



Bat Mitzvah of Evelyn Katz
 Daughter of Victoria Blanshteyn & Max Katz
 Saturday, June 5



Bar Mitzvah of Julian Goldstein
 Son of Jenny Michaelson & Noah Goldstein
 Saturday, June 19



Bar Mitzvah of Levi Chabon
 Son of Rabbi Jennie & Steve Chabon
 Saturday, June 26



Bat Mitzvah of Sofia Berenbaum
 Daughter of Rose Cohen & Emiliano Berenbaum
 Saturday, July 31

Welcome New Members!

Stephen Brooks	Dawn Brava
Jennifer & Seth Baruch	Linda & Steve Rothman
Marcy Wiesshar	Hana Moran
Nori & Jay Gleeman	Phil Footlic
Debra & Russell Kirschenbaum	

Mazel Tov to our newest grandparents!

Trish & Jared Goldin
 Marcie & Harvey Hochhauser
 Bernadette & Nat Bitton
 Cathie & Richard Izen

Connection Corner

By Keren Smith, Executive Director



Many years ago, I was invited to a friend's Bat Mitzvah at CBT, long before I even thought about ever joining it in any capacity. I drove up the winding road, pretty sure I had made a mistake because there is simply no way a synagogue can be

situated in this quiet hilly neighborhood.

Walking in, I fell in love with CBT right away. I was greeted so genuinely and warmly, made to feel like I was not a guest but had come home after a long while. It was odd to feel that way in a place I had never set foot in before. This feeling of coming home was intensified when I sat in the service, watching my friends' daughter do a magnificent job taking on the responsibility of our Jewish faith and watching a beautiful service unfold in front of my eyes. The service was magical: it was gentle and tender yet powerful and moving; it touched my heart. And although I wasn't familiar with most of the music, I instantly was drawn to then Cantor Chabon's angelic voice and magnetic presence.

Little did I know that this place that instantly won my heart would become my home, my extended family, and that Rabbi Chabon would become not only a person I look up to but also my close friend and partner; that I would end up serving this amazing community first as an educator and then as the Executive Director. I am so honored and proud to be here in this loving, warm community – thank you for inviting me in and having faith in me.

This spirit of warmth and coming back home is the cornerstone of who we are as a community. It didn't happen by mistake or by sheer luck; it was a conscious decision made by the founders of this community. In a recent email exchange I had with the founding member of CBT, Marc Usatin, he wrote to me, "The founding generation of CBT is aging. It did its job. We have survived and flourished. It's up to the new generation to maintain the ideals we were founded on...inclusivity, an honest warm environment."

Marc Usatin set us up for success in creating this hamish, 'honestly warm' environment that still defines who we are. So many of the members I talk to refer to



The CBT contribution of food at Monument Crisis Center filled an SUV! Thank you to the generosity of the Congregation B'nai Tikvah community!

Saturday, May 22nd at 6:30 pm



Join us for A Night in Disguise..... CBT GALA 2021 ~Maskarade~

Participating in our CBT auction via Zoom is no mystery. Just follow the steps below:

Step One: RSVP* - This event is open to all CBT members, guests, and anyone you think would want to support our wonderful Temple. All are welcome! No tickets to purchase!

Step Two - Fuel Your Bidding with Food Delivery! Tal's Patisserie (Danville) has graciously offered to donate 20% of proceeds back to CBT. *

Step Three - Order your SWAG! Again this year, we will be selling gala bags that will support the auction and will prepare you for the fun night ahead. More details soon... orders start the week of May 17th.

Step Four - Bid & Sign Up! Participate in our online auction and sign-up parties. Bidding will open the week of May 17th.

Step Five - (and possibly most important) - Wardrobe Prep!! Get your mask and outfit for the gala (what to wear, etc). Will you go Venetian Masquerade? Mardi Gras Ball? Carnival? Or do mask only? Whatever you decide is perfect!

***See Tikvah HaShavua & Beyond for more details and LINKS to RSVP, order food, etc!**

Sisterhood News

By Rayna Ravitz, Sisterhood President

I hope you were able to hear Talia Carner discuss her book "The Third Daughter" in April.

Cookie Svingos has been collecting Passover items for homebound seniors for the JCRC for several years. Usually, we fill up bags with food for the holiday. This year we were asked to bring 12 of each item and not to put them in bags. I sent out a Sign-up genius, and the list was complete in 4 hours! Thank you, everyone, for your participation! Thank you, Cookie and Jim, for delivering everything to the JCRC.

Sisterhood Shabbat was lovely. Idelle Lipman was named "Woman of the Year," and she was surprised, which I like. Idelle moved here from New Hampshire about ten years

ago. She jumped right into volunteering and attending CBT functions.

She recruited new members and got involved quickly. I call her our "Ambassador to Rossmoor" because she comes to events and brings others with her.

Idelle joined Sisterhood and the Book Sisters immediately. Within a few years, she joined the CBT Board that she serves on still.

Additionally, Idelle has been involved in committee work from the start. She became a member of the Ritual Committee and is now serving as its Chair, plus she is also on the Covid Response Team. Idelle has a son, daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren who live on the Peninsula, and they were able to Zoom with us for the evening to celebrate Idelle.

Congratulations to Idelle — you are a CBT star!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, May 20 – Book Sisters – 6:45 pm

"Water Dancer" by Ta-Nehisi Coates

Eileen Hinds will lead the Zoom discussion.

Thursday, June 17 – Book Sisters – 6:45 pm

(Guessing we will still be at home.)

"Homegoing" by Yaa Gyasi.

We need a discussion leader, and we need to find more books for the coming months.

Rayna

raynaravitz@gmail.com



Reflections...

Continued from Page 1

like us.

The mission of CBT's Racial Justice Caucus is "to strengthen our congregation's commitment to being a diverse, equitable and inclusive synagogue by engaging in racial justice work through introspection, education, and outreach." We meet monthly for rich and meaningful conversations about guiding our congregation towards a more just and equitable future. We would love to welcome more members of our congregation into

these conversations. If you identify as a Jew of Color or are raising children of color and would like to create an affinity space for other people or families of color, we would love to help you make that happen. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

None of us can know what each new day will bring to our local and national communities, but I do know that I want to be as present as I can be no matter what unfolds. It is only by being awake that we can discover how we are meant to contribute to the healing of the world.



June is Pride Month!

Join us to celebrate! Three programs will be offered to all in our congregation:

June 11th: Kabbalat Shabbat with a panel discussion

June 18th: Shir Joy including a speaker

June 21st: A special Social Gathering

More information will be in Monday emails.



From our resident Zoom & Zen poet, Jeff Weil

He dedicates this loving poem to our community.
Thank you Jeff for holding CBT with such love! Keren

Warm and Inviting

by Jeffrey S. Weil

It lures me back again and again
For so many reasons
Purim, Passover, High Holy Days
As we go through the seasons

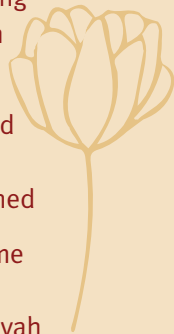
Being virtual in many ways
Has made participation a breeze
No need to drive or dress up
Just get on Zoom with ease

And so many programs
Seemingly one or two every day
For different modes of mind
Yoga, learning, party, Torah and pray

Who would have thought
Religion could be in such different form
But the one overwhelming feeling
Is that this is a place so warm

So inviting, embracing
Open to different views of mind
Such a loving place
Judaism, soul-comforting entwined

Like an inviting fireplace at home
On a cold, dreary day
I'm so glad to belong to B'nai Tikvah
For peace, love, compassion and to pray!



Contra Costa Midrasha

By Devra C. Aarons, CCM Director

We are rapidly approaching the end of this school year. For May and June, I am truly excited for the opportunity in these months to get to start seeing Midrasha people in person! Right now, we are poised to offer a couple of different opportunities for our teens to gather in person (safely - outdoors, with masks and social distancing.)

These events include:

- A Wednesday night hybrid for the last six weeks of Midrasha. Between April 14th & May 19th, we will switch off between being in person at B'nai Shalom and being on Zoom. Currently enrolled and new teens are invited to join us!
- Our Hamsa Fund and Better Together will end with special in-person events to celebrate the accomplishments of both of these groups.

Continued on Page 9

President's Message

Continued from Page 1

ancestors need to survive to bring us all to this very point in time to ensure that the Torah is passed on to each and every one of us?

In the tradition we have been given, we observe Shavout in mid-May, thanking G-d for the gift of Torah and celebrating the miracle at Sinai. Through the past year of upheaval and uncertainty, we have adapted; we are, however, beginning to move toward some normalcy! May 16, we will gather in-person to enjoy and support the talents of our fellow congregants. Then, on May 17, join us to hike together to the top of one of our local hills, watch the sunrise and learn Torah from Rabbi Chabon in person!

On May 22, our annual gala keeps us moving forward. Though the gala will be online again this year, we are looking toward the future and working for our community. Our theme this year is "Maskerade," and I can't wait! I urge you all to join us in this celebration of the wonderful community that we are.

A HUGE "thank you" goes to Rabbi Chabon, Keren, Chanel, Kathy, Lisa and Tina for holding us together over this past year (and counting). They continue to deliver meaningful, music-filled and inspiring programs. The work they do is nothing short of miraculous.

Family First Friday

1st Fridays at 6:30 pm on Zoom.

Fun, family-friendly services with interactive stories, prayers and melodies religious school children will recognize and everyone will enjoy.



In-Person Services

Join us for in-person services, outdoors, May 7th, & May 21st. Space is limited; more information will be in Monday emails.

These services will also be available virtually.

SERVICES AT CBT

For the most up to date details check your weekly email.

Kabbalat Shabbat

2nd & 5th Fridays at 5:00 pm

Join us as we prepare to enter Shabbat together in song and community. We will sing Shabbat melodies, chant the Mischeberach for those in need of healing, and recite Kaddish. We will end our time together by lighting candles.



Nishma

2nd Saturdays
at 10:00 am

(5/8, 6/12, 7/10, 8/14, 9/11) Zoom

Join us for Nishma, Hebrew for we will listen, a beautifully constructed Jewish world music experience. This incredible service, which is a hybrid of Reform and Conservative

traditions, was conceptualized and designed by our wonderful Rabbi Chabon, where she is in her truest form. The music is spectacular with guitar accompaniment by Lisa, the Torah reading is always moving, the teachings Rabbi weaves through the service are enriching, and her sermons always make you think of our world in a slightly different way. This service is truly magical!

Shir Joy Shabbat

3rd Fridays at 6:30 pm

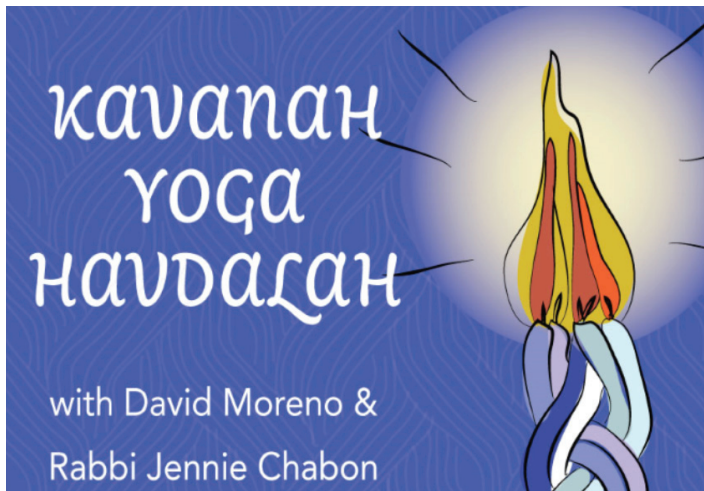
Join Rabbi Chabon & the Shir Joy Band for a joyous Shabbat service featuring live music, song & prayer.



Community Led Shabbat with Keren

4th Fridays at 6:30 pm

Experience this warm space of community leadership on the 4th Friday of each month where our members share their love of CBT through participation in the service.



Kavanah Yoga Havdalah

First Saturdays, 6:00-&:30pm on Zoom.

Let Rabbi Chabon and Master Yoga instructor, David Moreno, take you on a spiritual, cleansing, uplifting body and mind journey. This one of a kind Havdalah experience will rejuvenate you as you start a new week.

Suggested contribution to David Moreno \$15-\$25 sliding scale.

ONGOING PROGRAMS

For the most up to date details check your weekly email.

New Summer Meditation Series

Need some grounding in your life? Be sure to join in for this magical experience. Back by popular demand, CBT member Gerri Levitas is leading another meditation workshop series. Gerri is a professional hypnotherapist and is well-versed in guided meditation. Come to all four sessions or any one of them. Gerri will guide participants in these workshop on four topics:

- May 28: Blessings After Adversity
- June 25: Light & Hope
- July 23: Finding Your Inner Wisdom
- August 27: Softening Our Heart & Forgiving

Through guided visualization, this workshop will help participants center, ground and access deep wisdom within their own heart.



Zoom & Zen

Tuesdays at 1:00 pm on Zoom.

Join Rabbi Chabon for a spiritual exploration and a wonderful community discussion of sacred texts.

Thursdays at 10:00 am.

Looking to connect? Join this wonderful, safe & caring space for both casual and deep conversations.

In Gratitude to our Community

GENERAL FUND

In memory of William Saltikov
In memory of Milton Zagon
Kim & Brian Zagon
In memory of Henry Daniels
In memory of Ruth Daniels
In memory of Hanna Carter
Danita & Jeffrey Daniels
In memory of Shoshana Maizel Fogel
In memory of William Bushell
Yonina & Barry Bushell
In memory of Bette Kalash
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In memory of Jean Kindall
In memory of Lawrence Berger
Kathy & Marc Berger
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In memory of Lillian Kalish Weiner
Susan Light & Rob Weiner
In memory of Alice Kushnick
In memory of Lucille Winslow
Beverly & Phil Winslow
In memory of Lillian Kornhauser
In memory of Irene Letush Friedman
Nancy & Norm Friedman
In memory of Max Goldin
In honor of the birth of Guy Goldin
Trish & Jared Goldin
In memory of Robert Salusky
In memory of Kimball Sutherland
Monica Salusky & John Sutherland
In memory of Raymond Barrall
Judith & Scott Barrall
In memory of Philip Cohn
In memory of Thelma Cohn
In memory of Shirley Brooks
Annette & Michael Cohn
In memory of Abraham Kurzrock
Carol & Matthias Kurzrock
In memory of Ruth Schottland
Rachel van Cleave & Joe Schottland
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In memory of Edward Chakoff
Jackie Chakoff
In memory of Ada Yetskaya
In memory of Stella Malkova
In memory of Velly Malkov
In memory of Zodick Malkov
In memory of Mehail Malkov
Rakhil Sadetskiy
In memory of Shirley Maslin
In memory of Sidney Deutsch

Marcia & Harvey Maslin
In memory of Mel Lerner
Amy & Joy Lerner
In memory of Dora Potuto
Julie & Joseph Patute
In memory of Michelle Smilo Yohrgat
Bernadette & Nat Bitton
In memory of Mildred Zelman
Irene & Ron Zelmam
In Appreciation of CBT
In honor of Keren Smith's promotion to
Executive Director
The Lapporte Family
In memory of Naum Sadetskiy
Natalia & Michail Sadetskiy
In memory of Renee Denwitt
In memory of Barbara Sloban
Nancy & Arthur Solomon
In memory of Charles Wechsler
Chelsea & Glenn Wechsler
In memory of E. Melvin Pinsel
Monica Pinsel
In memory of Stan Palmer
Jessica Palmer
In memory of Craig Berkus
Alvin Trepper
In memory of Anna & Solomon Patipa
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DISCRETIONARY FUND
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Donald Young
In memory of Ann Dienst
In memory of Robert Kemna
Gloria Kemna
In memory of Harry Dvorsky
Kathy & Steve Weiner
In appreciation of Rabbi Chabon
Dee Hirsch
Tina & Eric Eisenman
In memory of Walter Schoenholz
Debbie & Michael Schoenholz
In memory of Julia Scharlach
In memory of Max Sherman
Lynette & Alan Scharlach
In memory of Morris Kaplan
Iris Kaplan
In memory of Gussie Tama
Sharon & Hugh Tama
In memory of David Specland
Rob Specland
Amy Lichtenstein

In appreciation of Nishma
Alison Negrin
Lenore Arnberg
In memory of Harry Moebius
Beth & Jeff Mikesell
In honor of Rabbi Chabon
The Lapporte Family
In honor of Jennie Chabon becoming
Rabbi/Cantor of Congregation B'nai Tikvah
Suzanne Goldstein
In appreciation to Julia Babka-Kurzrock
Paula & Robert Schiff
In memory of Stanley Levyn
Terri & Brent Waterman
In memory of Lynn Kaufman
Kim & Brian Zagon
In honor of Rebecca Abraham
completing her clinical fellowship year
Regina & Seth Abraham
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Rob Specland
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Trish & Jared Goldin
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In memory of Elaine Unger
Judith & Scott Barrall
In memory of Dan Schwartz
In honor of Bernadette & Nat Bitton's
new granddaughter
Cookie Svingos
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In memory of David Specland
Matthew Cohen
Anita Gabriel
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In memory of Conrad Platt
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In memory of Janet Zeimer
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Sally Cohen

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In memory of Isaac Bronstone
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In memory of Alan Greenbat
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In memory of Virginia E. Becker
In memory of Paul Arnon Klein
Susan & John Klein

STEPHAN JASPAN RELIGIOUS
SCHOOL FUND

In appreciation of Keren Smith
Dee Hirsch

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In memory of Israel Nadjari
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In memory of Ida Staffieri
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In memory of Harry Wittenberg
In memory of Barbara Hirsch
In memory of Anne Devins
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Cookie Svingos

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HELP THE MORTGAGE FUND

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In memory of Marvin Maslin
Marcia & Harvey Maslin

ADULT EDUCATION FUND

In memory of Beverly Anne Pinsel
Monica Pinsel

SPECIAL EDUCATION FUND

In honor of Ryan Slavet's Bar Mitzvah
Mona Epstein

In memory of Leah Gordon
Robin & Larry Gordon

Contra Costa Midrasha

Continued from Page 5

May features our annual graduation on May 26th. Congratulations to B'nai Tikvah members Eliana Goldstein, Gabe Isserman, Ryan Johnson, Elizabeth Paul, Zachary Roberson, and Micah Wilk who will be graduating as part of this class of 16 teens. Mazel Tov to their families! We will likely host this evening in a hybrid format. If you want to join us for the live-streamed event, check our website for announcements!

CCM's Hamsa Fund just finished their allocation plans for the year. The group has raised close to \$15,000! They chose non-profit groups American Friends of ELI, Winter Nights, Shalom Bayit, Rebuilding Together, and Loaves and Fishes - all organizations supporting the health and safety of families. A huge mazel tov to the 11 teens for all their hard work this year!

We're crossing our fingers that Midrasha can fully resume for "in-person" sessions this Fall 2021.

Announcements about retreats, Wednesday nights, and more will continue coming out.

We look forward to seeing all of you in person in the coming weeks and months. To see our current plans, visit ccmidrasha.com

Connection Corner

Continued from Page 3

exactly that same feeling that I had the first time I walked through our doors – a feeling of coming back home. And even now, in this pandemic, when we have all been meeting just virtually, new members often experience this same feeling that we, as a community, are able to translate into even the virtual space.

In her High Holiday address, Rabbi Chabon talked about our continued work of being a welcoming community in an ever-changing world and our need to be "radically welcoming," which means "recognizing the need to not just be welcoming by default, but by action and statements." This new and introspective look at being welcoming and inclusive is the work that is needed in order to uphold the vision of our CBT founding members by ensuring that all who come through our doors feel that same sensation of coming back home.

There is a level of openness and compassion that radiates from our community. A love and care that each one of us brings to create that sense.

I am so thankful to be part of such an incredible community, and to be on a journey with Rabbi Chabon of opening our doors even wider to ensure everyone is let in with love.

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The Reutlinger
Community
SCHIFF CENTER FOR LIFE

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Contact the CBT office to put your ad in the next Tikvah Talk!

Email office@tikvah.org or call 925-933-5397

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For membership information, please email the Executive Director, Keren Smith, at ksmith@tikvah.org.



Maskerade

CBT Annual Gala
May 22, 6:30 pm on Zoom
All are welcome! Any questions, contact Lori Siegel.