

# לשנה טובה

## High Holy Days Schedule 5779/2018

### Community Selichot Program Saturday, September 1 at 8:30 p.m.

At Congregation Beth El, Fairfield

8:30 p.m. Havdalah

8:45 p.m. Selichot Speaker: Rev. Thomas M. Simisky, President,

Fairfield Prep

9:30 p.m. Service, flowed by refreshments

(See details on P.8)

### Erev Rosh Hashanah Eve Sunday, September 9

6:00 p.m. Service at Jennings Beach (weather permitting: check website or call Temple that afternoon if uncertain)

7:30 p.m. Service at Temple

### Rosh Hashanah Monday, September 10

10:00 a.m. Morning Service (Sanctuary)

10:00 a.m. Morning Service (Tent)

10:00 a.m. Youth Program (Grades

Pre-K-3)

3:30 p.m. Family Services (Preschool & Elementary School Age)

### Rosh Hashanah, 2<sup>nd</sup> Day Tuesday, September 11

10:00 a.m. Service

12:30 p.m. Tashlich (on Brooklawn Parkway)

### Cemetery Memorial Service Sunday, September 16

1:00 p.m. in Fairfield

2:00 p.m. in Monroe

### Kol Nidre

#### Tuesday, September 18

6:30 p.m. Early Service

8:45 p.m. Late Service

### Yom Kippur

#### Wednesday, September 19

9:00 a.m. Family Service (Preschoolers) (Chapel)

10:00 a.m. Morning Service (Sanctuary)

10:00 a.m. Morning Service (Tent)

10:00 a.m. Youth Program (Grades Pre-K-3)

1:00 p.m. Adult Learning – 10 Days, 10 Questions (See P.8)

1:30 p.m. Family Service (Grades K-6) (Sanctuary)

2:45 p.m. Afternoon Service

4:45 p.m. Yizkor Service (approximate time)

5:45 p.m. Neilah (Concluding) Service

### Erev Sukkot

#### Sunday, September 23

5:00 p.m. Sukkah Decorating

5:30 p.m. Potluck Picnic

6:00 p.m. Service

7:15 p.m. Adult Sukkot Study

### Sukkot

#### Monday, September 24

10:00 a.m. Sukkot Service

10:00 a.m. Young Children's Sukkot Program and Service

### Erev Simchat Torah

#### Sunday, September 30

5:00 p.m. Flag-making

6:00 p.m. Family Services with B'nai Israel Klezmer Band (See P.16)

### Simchat Torah

#### Monday, October 1

10:00 a.m. Yizkor Service

## Putting a New Spin on Sukkot, and Celebrating a Great Tradition

### Sukkot

Each year during Sukkot we sing Pete Seeger's "Turn Turn Turn," which comes from a well-known line in the Book of Ecclesiastes (Kohelet), traditionally read during this holiday: "To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven." As the seasons change and we have reasons to contemplate and celebrate, music always plays an important part. This year we will decorate the B'nai Israel sukkah with upcycled CDs.

Please join us for the start of Sukkot on Sunday, September 23, for decorating, dinner and a service. A main dish will be provided for dinner, but we ask families

with last names beginning with A-M to bring a nut-free side dish or salad to share, and families with last names beginning with N-Z to bring a nut-free dessert to share.

We'll decorate the Sukkah starting at 5:00 p.m., followed by dinner at 5:30 p.m. and the Sukkot service at 6:00 p.m. There will be an Adult Learning class at 7:15 p.m. (See the details on Page 8.)

RSVPs, which are requested for meal planning, and any questions can be sent to Annie Ringelheim at [annieringelheim@gmail.com](mailto:annieringelheim@gmail.com).

### Simchat Torah

Celebrate with us on Sunday, September 30, as we complete the annual reading of the Torah. Dancing, singing and flag waving are all parts of this joyous event. Students with a bar or bat mitzvah in the upcoming year will have the opportunity to stand by their Torah portions in the unfurled scroll. Everyone is invited for a pizza dinner and tiny Torah making at 5:30 p.m., with the service to follow at 6:00 p.m.

Join us the following morning at 10:00 a.m. for Simchat Torah Yizkor services.

## Sharing Our JoY

**Naomi Schaffer and Roger Jackson**, in celebration of the marriage of William Schaffer and Lindsay Kovacic.

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## Welcome, New Members

A warm welcome to our newest members. We look forward to their participation in our many programs and hope their affiliation will not only enrich their lives, but that of our congregation.

**Jesse and Lauren Kramer, and Sullivan**

Old Elm Road, Fairfield

**Adam and Kate Fierman, Zachary, Noah & Reid**

South Benson Road, Fairfield

**Jeffrey and Amy Beth Alterman, and Sydney**

Gray Rock Road, Trumbull

**David and Marcie Slepian**

Fairmount Terrace, Fairfield

**Dr. Daniel Pallay**

Brooklawn Avenue, Bridgeport

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## Sincere Sympathy

We extend our sympathy to the bereaved families of

**Jay Stubenhaus**

**Alice Hochhauser**, mother of Kenneth Hochhauser

**Phyllis Plotkin**, sister of Marsha Gillette

**Seymour Rubak**, father of Evelyn Rubak

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## Thank You, Volunteers

We thank the following members who volunteered and donated at our recent blood drive: Bernie Jacobs, Anne Kirsch and Theodore Leviss.

Our next Red Cross Blood Drive is scheduled for Wednesday, November 7. Look for more details in Hashavua and next month's Bulletin..

**Remember to bring non-perishable food to donate on Yom Kippur!**

## BULLETIN BOARD

### New Staff Member

Please join us in welcoming our newest member of the B'nai Israel staff, Maintenance Director Eric Braisted. Eric replaces Johnny Flores, who left for another opportunity. Eric brings with him 30-plus years of experience in facility management and purchasing from GE Corp. Eric lives with his wife, Catherine, in Shelton. Eric has been great getting 'up to speed' with all things facilities-related. If you see Eric in the building, please say "hello" and introduce yourself.



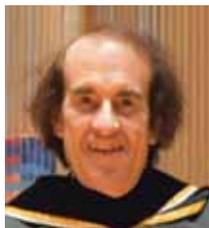
### Stay Connected in College

The Congregation B'nai Israel College Committee serves to remind students who are members of the congregation that even while they are away at school, they remain integral parts of our community. Several times a year we send students care packages that include small gifts and letters from our rabbis to help them remain engaged with our congregation.

If you would like your child who is currently enrolled in college to be included on this mailing list, please send their mailing address and college email address for the 2018-19 school year committee Chair Lauren Tropp at [lmtrupp@aol.com](mailto:lmtrupp@aol.com). Because so many student addresses change from year to year, we need this information even if your child was on our mailing list for the previous year.

### HUC-JIR Honor for Congregant

B'nai Israel congregant Richard A. Krantz in June became the newest member of the Board



of Governors of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR). Richard is a distinguished attorney and Reform Movement leader who serves as Chair of the HUC-JIR's Eastern Region Board of Overseers.

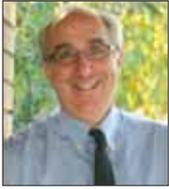
"Richard Krantz is deeply committed to the vitality of Reform Judaism and our sacred mission of preparing the next generations of Jewish professional leaders for the Reform Movement and the Jewish people," stated Rabbi David Ellenson, HUC-JIR Interim President. "His dedication and guidance will strengthen our institution and help ensure a vibrant Jewish future."

Richard is a partner of the law firm of Culhane Meadows, PLLC. He has served as a member of the Eastern Region Board of Overseers for almost eight years, prior to his election as Chair on March 14, 2018. He is a member of both Congregation Rodeph Sholom in New York City and Congregation B'nai Israel, where he served as President. He also formerly served on the NFTY National Board. He lives in New York City with his wife, Joanne.

Founded in 1875, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion is North America's leading institution of higher Jewish education and the academic, spiritual, and professional leadership development center of Reform Judaism.

### AARP Driving Class

Join our congregant, Ernest "Ernie" Malecki, on Monday, September 17 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for this one-day class designed by AARP for senior drivers. Please pre-register with Ernie directly by calling (203) 922-0048 or emailing him at [enmalecki113@gmail.com](mailto:enmalecki113@gmail.com). The cost is \$15 for AARP members and \$20 for nonmembers (checks payable to AARP).



From the Rabbi's Desk/Rabbi James Prosnit

## I'm a Zionist (but sometimes they don't make it easy)

I can't wait for our congregational trip to Israel this coming March. I love showing people who have never been to Israel the amazing country that in 70 years has been a blessing to both the Jews who live there and those who live here. I love re-experiencing the land, people and language with those who have traveled before. Whether it be "walking the Bible" or marveling at the 21<sup>st</sup>-century scientific and cultural achievements, a dose of Israel never fails to energize me and inspire my Jewish soul.

But governments do not make it easy – and actions this summer by the Knesset were case and point. The passage of what is called the Nation State bill has left some of us Israel watchers and lovers as perplexed about what is going on in Israel as we are as to what is going on in our own country.

For those of you who weren't following, the new law unnecessarily and provocatively proclaims that Israel is a Jewish state. That's not new. The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel 70 years ago made that clear. The concept is central to Zionist thinking, and the average fifth-grader in an American synagogue school knows it! But the version of the bill that passed this summer included a provision that promotes Jewish settlements everywhere and gives rise to the criticism that, at best, Israel's two million Arab citizens should be tolerated. Arabic will no longer be one of Israel's official languages and instead has been downgraded to a preferred one. All in all, the law passed by the Knesset comes dangerously close to declaring Jewish superiority by giving special rights to Jews that are not guaranteed to all citizens of the State of Israel.

It also has implications for us, for Jews in the Diaspora, by defining who is a Jew in terms that kowtow to the Orthodox elements in the Knesset.

Now, you may ask, why did the Netanyahu administration agree to this? In all likelihood, because the Prime Minister plans to call elections sooner



than required and this will no doubt please right-wing voters and force opponents to "prove" that they, too, are good Jews and Zionists, something that hitherto the Israeli public may have taken for granted.

But one of my core fears is that this direction will only increase what already is becoming a more shaky relationship between liberal Diaspora Jews and the government of Israel. It gives fuel to those who say Israel is abandoning the democratic principles that were part of its very core. As we try to build up that relationship with a Temple trip, Birthright experiences, NFTY trips, the Israeli emissaries who we've recently welcomed and a host of Israel programming, Israel risks marginalizing itself with some of its decisions.

As my colleague Rabbi Jeffrey Salkin has written, "For the past 70 years, we Jews have been defending Israel intellectually with a bumper sticker that reads "the only democracy in the Middle East." Israel has made that self-satisfied piece of PR more difficult to proclaim. Some of us work full-time in fighting the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) movement, which seeks to isolate Israel economically. We defend Israel against charges that it is or is becoming an apartheid state.

To Knesset members, we say a sarcastic thanks.

I look forward to being back there in March. I can never walk away, but sometimes politicians don't make it easy!

## Thoughts For A Reluctant Zionist

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *Rabbi Prosnit shared his September column with congregation Past President Sam Rosenberg and thought that his response offers a compelling counterpoint.*

**By Samuel Rosenberg**

Israel is not the nation-state of the Jews? Hebrew is not the language of Israel? Shabbat must be another workday, uncelebrated in Israel? Jews are not supposed to settle the land? What's the point of Israel if Jewish self-determination is so abhorrent? Let's call the whole thing off.

It was precisely calls to call the whole thing off which prompted the original work on the Nation State bill, over 15 years ago. Then, some of the same people now decrying its passage, were proposing a binational state, a single state combining Israel, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, effectively ending Jewish self-determination. This bill enshrines the Jewish character of Israel in the Basic Laws, creating a bulwark against future efforts.

But, once again, another policy of the Netanyahu administration is the apocalypse and will destroy Israel's democracy. Yet, the Knesset passed decades ago Basic Laws detailing the core rights of Israeli citizens, Jewish or not. The Nation State law does not abridge these individual rights and freedoms. The United States is an exception in a world filled with democracies based on ethnicity or historical peoplehood. Jews codifying finally their homeland as their own after two millennia of saying "Next Year in Jerusalem" will not result

*Continued on page 15*

# Meet the Emissaries

We welcome Shay Eshel, Eyal Marom, Yuval Shahar and Rotem Sharon to our community this fall as part of the Israeli Emissary program sponsored by the Federation for Jewish Philanthropy of Upper Fairfield County. Now in its 20th year, the program's goal is to build a living bridge between Israel and our community. Shay, Eyal, Yuval and Rotem are recent high school graduates who have chosen to postpone their army service to spend the year sharing their love of Israel with our preschools and religious schools as well as in our adult education programs, local high schools, day schools and Jewish Senior Services. While all four will work together on community events, they will have primary responsibilities at individual synagogues.

## Eyal Marom

I'm from Daverat, a beautiful kibbutz near Afula. My father, Jonathan, is a colonel in the IDF Air Force. My mother, Yifat, is an accountant in Afula. I have two younger sisters, Aya and Shir, both of whom are in elementary school.

In high school, I majored in both software engineering and music. I have been studying jazz music and playing the piano since I was 7. In my last three years of high school, I participated in the IDF program *Magshimim*, the National Cyber Program that trains young students from



Our new Young Israeli Emissaries spent time with Director of Education Ira Wise in Israel this summer.

10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade to become an Army intelligence cyber officer. I also was a part of the Bney Hamoshavim youth movement, where I was a counselor for two years.

I chose to do *shlichut* (serving as an emissary) because I believe that the connection between our communities is both important and meaningful. I feel strongly that this connection is necessary to keep the Jewish people together. Therefore, my goals for this year are to become a part of the "living bridge" by taking a larger role in connecting Jewish life across the world.

## Shay Eshel

My name is Shay Eshel, I live in Moshav Ram-On in the Yizrael Valley. I love living in the Moshav because it keeps me very close to all my friends, and I like it that I am attached to my neighbors and to my Moshav community.

We are a family of four – my father Amir, my mother Yael, my brother Reyi and me. My brother is two years younger than me, and I like that age difference because we are very close to each other. My mother works as a CPA, and my father is a lawyer.

I have been dancing professional Classical Ballet, Modern, Jazz and Tap for 11 years. I do it four to five times a week, sometimes even more. I dance the syllabus of the Royal Academy of Dance in London. I also have other hobbies, such as scuba diving, swimming, watching TV, meeting with friends and going to the beach. I consider myself an adventurous person, and I really like to try new things and get to know new people and new places.

I chose to do the *shlichut* because I love the Jewish life and community and I believe that the connection of the Jews in Israel and the Jews in the Diaspora is inseparable. Moreover, I want to serve the State of Israel by giving my time and skills to represent my country in the Jewish community abroad. I'm so excited for the upcoming year, and I'm thrilled to share my love for Israel with you guys.

## Rotem Sharon

My name is Rotem Sharon. I'm 18 years old. I live in Alloney Abba. I have two older siblings. My sister, Adi, 24, is a physical therapy student at Haifa University. My brother Tomer, 22, just finished his service in the IDF. My father, Dror, is the CEO of a company called Magal. My mother, Yael, is the COO of a company called DGA.

## Extend A Personal Welcome

Take advantage of a wonderful opportunity to add some cross-cultural enrichment to your family life! Please reach out to our special young ambassadors. Invite them to your home for a Shabbat dinner or to spend a day with your family going apple picking or to a baseball game. Show them a bit about life in the United States and listen as they share their thoughts on life in Israel.

This program is not just for the youth of our community. Invite them to one of your adult dinner parties, and let them share their observations about politics,

culture and societal issues in Israel. This wonderful opportunity to build bridges is made possible through our Federation's relationship with the Jewish Agency for Israel.

If you are interested in inviting any or all of the Shinshinim to have a meal with your family or would like to explore the possibility of becoming a host family for three months, please contact Stacy Kamisar at [skamisar@jewishphilanthropyct.org](mailto:skamisar@jewishphilanthropyct.org) or Judy Blumenthal at [jblumenthal@jewishphilanthropyct.org](mailto:jblumenthal@jewishphilanthropyct.org).



From the Rabbi's Study/Rabbi Evan Schul tz

# What Exactly Am I Hoping to Accomplish on Yom Kippur?

Welcome to the month of September. School has started, the first breezes of fall are in the air, and many of us find ourselves again preparing for the High Holy Days. One thing that I have been thinking about as I prepare to enter this season and new year 5779 is, "What exactly am I hoping to accomplish on Yom Kippur?"

I ask this question because (of course) our tradition is somewhat vague about the meaning of the word *t'shuvah*, which is the central piece of the day. On one hand, many of us often translate *t'shuvah* to mean "atonement." So, on one level, the purpose of the day is to come to synagogue with a metaphoric backpack filled with all of our sins and mistakes from the past year and to dump out the backpack through our prayers and the pounding of our chests. As it says in the book of Numbers, "If a man or a woman commit any of the sins of man ... they must confess the sin that they committed." So, on Yom Kippur, as the Ne'ila gates close and we sound the shofar one last time, we symbolically

leave with an empty backpack, having confessed and atoned for all of our sins of the past year. As we leave, many of us know that we will come back again next year with the backpack once again filled, perhaps for some of us with the same exact sins and mistakes as the year before.

The challenge here is that in some ways that is only half the story. While *t'shuvah* can be translated to mean "atonement," the word in fact originates from the root meaning "to return." To return is not

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## **"Can we enter the synagogue (on Yom Kippur) the following year with a backpack that is a little bit lighter?"**

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only to atone for one's sins and mistakes, but to reach complete *t'shuvah* means to return to your true self and to change for the better. As Maimonides writes in his compendium of Jewish law, the Mishneh Torah, "[Who has reached] complete

*t'shuvah*? A person who confronts the same situation in which he sinned when he has the potential to commit [the sin again], and, nevertheless, abstains and does not commit it ... a sinner should abandon his sins and remove them from his thoughts, resolving in his heart, never to commit them again. (Mishneh Torah Hilchot Teshuvah 2:1-2)

In other words, when we gather together on Yom Kippur, we are to confess and atone for our mistakes from the last year, as well as resolving to ourselves to NOT commit the same mistakes again in the coming year (It's a little like Jewish New Year's resolutions). Can we enter the synagogue the following year with a backpack that is a little bit lighter? If we find ourselves in the same situation in the coming year, can we find the strength and resolve to not make the same mistakes? These are the questions that our tradition pushes us to grapple with in this season. May it be a meaningful time of *t'shuvah* for all of us as we enter this season of awe and return.

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## EMISSARIES ..... From Page 4

In high school I majored in both physics and media, which included production of documentary films. I really like music and playing the piano and guitar. In addition, I love handcrafting such as knitting, crocheting and embroidery. I was also a part of the Bney Hamoshavim youth movement, where I was a counselor for two years.

I chose to do this *shlichut* because it gives me the opportunity to strengthen this important connection with the Jewish communities in the Diaspora, along with having new experiences that will help my personal development. It's an opportunity to spread the Israeli culture as I experience it every day. I'm sure it will be a beautiful adventure that I will

not forget and can't wait to start.

### **Yuval Shahar**

I have a small and very close family. My father, Hanan, is a police officer, and my mom, Esther, is an artist who also teaches English and art. My brother, Roi, is 23 years old and serves as an officer in the IDF. We live in a small communal village called Gan Ner in the beautiful Gilboa area. I have very good friends with whom I spend a lot of my time.

I studied two majors in high school – Arabic (reading, writing and speaking) and theater, in which I learned acting skills, writing and more. I enjoyed every minute on stage. I have four years of *Hadracha* and volunteering experience in two dif-

ferent organizations – one with disabled children and the second as an instructor and mentor for a group of 30 kids in Bney Hamoshavim youth movement. I like sports very much and playing soccer with my friends. Since I was a little boy, I participated in athletic competitions. Music and dancing have a huge part in my life, too.

I want to do the *shlichut* because I believe that the best way to learn and understand Israel is to meet an Israeli like me, who grew up in Israel and can tell about it from his point of view. I love to be an instructor. I love Israel, and I hope to represent it in the best way I can. I want to be a meaningful instructor and *shaliach* in the community



Bonim Buzz/Alexa Cohen, Early Childhood Director

## Shapers of the Future S.T.R.E.A.M. Through B'nai Israel

At Congregation B'nai Israel, lifelong learning begins in our preschool classrooms. We've instituted a new science and technology program that other early childhood programs already use, but while the others generate S.T.E.A.M. – Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics – Bonim flows with S.T.R.E.A.M.

We added the 'R' for Reading into the S.T.E.A.M. curriculum, and there are many ways for children to experience literacy instruction.

“We are so thrilled about this new addition to the Bonim preschool program,” Rabbi Schultz says. “We are fostering the next generation of creative, dynamic Jewish thinkers.”

**“S.T.R.E.A.M. gives children a head start by inspiring them to think creatively and solve problems.”**

S.T.R.E.A.M. gives children a head start by inspiring them to think creatively and solve problems. Certified teacher Adele Josovitz helps our students explore a state-of-the-art lab that includes a wind tunnel, magnet wall, Beebots for coding, and robotics. Adele reads to them, leads them in games and experiments. They get to try so many different things.

It's a great way to introduce the students to such an important area of education and to better prepare them for school and beyond. They learn so much across so many different areas. These subjects impact so much of their lives.

At Bonim, we provide services for infants to Pre-K children – open to the whole community – but S.T.R.E.A.M. is not just for those entering kindergarten. Children as young as two years old will be able to experience the S.T.R.E.A.M. program through activities such as the water table and wind tunnel.

This new experiment is most definitely a success so far. The kids love it. They're having so much fun and are really excited.

## BIFTY

### WELCOME TO THE NEW YEAR

We are excited for BIFTY's new year! All B'nai Israel high school teens are invited. Programs take place on Thursdays from 7:15 to 8:45 p.m. in the BIFTY Lounge.

BIFTY will meet this month on September 6, 13, 20, and 27. We are looking forward to welcoming new members.

Our 2018-2019 board members are:

**Presidents:** Hannah Mallon and Alex Weisman

**Programming Vice President:** Henry Szuchman

**Social Action Vice President:** Sophie Lipset

**Religious and Cultural Vice Presidents:** Max Fink and Jessica Becker

**Communications Vice President:** Noah Giglietti

## Unscrolling a New Sound



*When we conclude the annual reading of the Torah on Simchat Torah on Sunday, September 30, at 6:00 p.m. (see details on Page 1), B'nai Israel also will debut our new Klezmer band, featuring (from left): Scott Casher, Adam Rosen, Jason Allen, Alex Rabb, Rebecca Blondin, Janet Rosen and Ben Bausher.*

**Membership Vice President:** Vanessa Weiss

**NFTY Rep:** Becca Fink

**10th Grade Rep:** Alexa Sheiman

Questions? Email advisor Marisa Underberger [munderberger@cbibpt.org](mailto:munderberger@cbibpt.org). Follow us on Facebook at “BIFTY 2018-2019” or on Instagram @ cbi.bifty.



From the Education Center/Ira J. Wise  
**Won't You Be My Neighbor?**

At the end of July, I went to see the new documentary about Fred Rogers. You may remember him from the PBS show "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood," which aired from 1968 to 2001. He remains one of my greatest educational heroes. I try to incorporate many of his ideas into my work and how we educate our children at B'nai Israel.

Mr. Rogers asked us to be his neighbor because neighbors are more than people living in proximity. They are people who interact with and look out for one another.

Although he had retired and was fighting a terminal illness, Fred Rogers returned to television, just for a few minutes, to help us begin to wrap our arms around the events of September 11, 2001. Many of us were grateful to hear his voice at that traumatic moment. A portion of his public service announcement is shown at the end of the documentary. This quote stuck with me:

*"I'm so grateful to you for helping the children in your life to know that you'll do everything you can to keep them safe and to help them express their feelings*

**"At our core, though, is the idea that every one of our children feels safe, protected, welcome and loved at B'nai Israel. And that their parents feel secure in the knowledge that their children are indeed safe."**

*in ways that will bring healing in many different neighborhoods."*

He articulated one of the core principles that is part of everything we do in the Education Center. Some our students finish their time in our school with more or less knowledge than others. Some will have more or fewer friends than others. Some will feel more or less connection with their Jewish identity than others. Much of that depends on what they bring with them and how open they are to those things. Every one of them – every one of us – is different.

At our core, though, is the idea that every one of our children feels safe, protected, welcome and loved at B'nai Israel. And that their parents feel secure in the knowledge that their children are indeed safe.

That explains why, when a parent calls or sends a note that they are picking their child up early from class, we insist that they come inside and then we go get their child. We often only have Bethanne in the office during class time. If she were to respond to a phone call and bring a student down to wait for their ride, and then she were to get another call for another student, how could we protect the first child? So thank you for understanding and coming inside.

That explains why we ask so many questions in our enrollment materials. We want to know as much as we can about your children so we can respond to them as individuals. And if your child has some unique learning needs, we want to make sure we are acting in concert with you and with their other teachers and any other professionals in their lives.

And finally, that explains why we make the effort to bring your family together with other families in your child's grade. When you begin to think of one another as neighbors, and not just as people whose children participate in the same activities, we change the world for our children. We show them that their synagogue is an extension of their home, filled with neighbors who generally care about them and their well-being. And when something frightens or worries us, we can rely on one another to help us through it.

L'shalom,

Ira J. Wise, D.J.R.E.  
 Director of Education

Please visit Ira's blog at <http://bit.ly/WTTNLNeighbor> to read more about Mr. Rogers.

## Religious School Notebook

### Important School Dates

Watch your email for details!

#### Sunday, September 9

10:00 a.m.–Family Apple Picking at Beardsley Cider Mill in Shelton

#### Thursday, September 13

4:30 p.m. – First Day, Kitot Daled-Vav (4<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup>)

#### Sunday, September 16

9:30 a.m. – First Day, Gan -Kitah Gimel (K -3<sup>rd</sup>) and Kitot Daled-Vav are in session

9:45 a.m. – Parent Meeting: Kitot Daled-Vav (4<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup>)

11:00 a.m.–Parent Meeting: Gan-Kitah Gimel (K-3<sup>rd</sup>)

Noon – Family Picnic

#### Monday, September 17

7:00 p.m. – First Day, Kitot Zayin and Chet (7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>)

#### Sunday, September 23

5:00 p.m. – Erev Sukkot Program, service & dinner (See P.1)

#### Monday, September 24

7:00 p.m. – Cantor's Fall Class Family Meeting

#### Sunday, September 30

9:30 a.m. – Family Workshop and Consecration: New student families Gan-Kitah Gimel (K-3<sup>rd</sup>)

#### Sunday, September 30

5:00 p.m. – Erev Simchat Torah Program and service (See P.1)

# Making the Days Count, Instead of Counting the Days

**EDITOR'S NOTE: Elena Smith is our 2017 Jim Abraham Jewish Leadership Fellowship. She returned in late May after studying for nine months in Israel with Year Course.**

*Thank you, B'nai Israel. Now that I am back home, I have started to look back on the experiences I was able to have, thanks to the Jim Abraham Leadership Fellowship. I was able to travel, learn and help others all while exploring my Jewish roots. It was an amazing experience, and I could not have done it without the generosity and kindness of the synagogue and the scholarship fund. As part of these many experiences while studying in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, I was given the amazing honor to speak at the Year Course program graduation and sum up my experience. Here are excerpts of my remarks.*

Friends, Madrachim, Administration. It has been nine months since we stepped off of that plane into this adventure we call Year Course. When we boarded the plane in New York on September 2, I don't think any of us knew what we were getting ourselves into. I myself did not

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**“We all have one voice, but if we use it wisely, one voice is all we need.”**

---

realize that these strangers sitting beside me would become like a second family and that I would grow into myself as a person, a Jew and a Zionist.

When I first arrived in Israel, I thought that this was going to be the longest nine months ever -- being in a country where

I don't speak the language, without my parents and in an unknown environment. I thought I would be perpetually lost and confused. Yet, as I stand here in front of all of you today, I feel as though we just got here a few weeks ago.

When you break it down, we aren't actually here for very long. Thirty-nine weeks, that's it. Now, 39 weeks may seem like a lot; it's about 273 days. In reality, 39 weeks isn't all that much. That's 39 Shabbats, 39 weekend adventures. Thanks to the opportunities we were given by Year Course, we spent 39 jam-packed weeks learning, impacting and exploring Israel and how we fit into its narrative, individually and as a generation.

We were all given the chance to impact Israel up close by having the opportunity

*Continued on the next page*

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## Adult Jewish Learning at Congregation B'nai Israel

**Community Slichot Program  
Saturday, September 1 at 8:30 p.m.  
At Congregation Beth El, Fairfield**

8:30 p.m.—Havdalah  
8:45 p.m.—Selichot  
Speaker: Rev. Thomas M. Simisky  
9:30 p.m.—Service—  
Followed by  
refreshments  
We join with the  
members of other



congregations in our community to begin the High Holy Season with a program and service. Father Tom Simisky, S.J., President of Fairfield College Preparatory School, is a Jesuit priest originally from Worcester, Mass., whose life includes many journeys marked by teaching, leadership and a global perspective.

**Adult Learning for Sukkot  
Sunday, September 23 at 7:15 p.m.**

The festival of Sukkot celebrates the harvest and our hopes for the future. Join Rabbis Prosnit and Schultz and Ira Wise for some adult learning and conversation. We begin not long after Erev Sukkot services, which are at 6:00 p.m. See Page 1 for a schedule of all festival-related activities.

**The Torah of Civic and Civil  
Engagement  
Lifelong Learning: Fridays, September  
28, October 5, 12, 19, 26, and November  
2 at Noon**

In this election season – as in most – there are many opinions about many issues and candidates. The same Jewish book – Pirkei Avot – tells us to both avoid the notice of the government AND to not stand idly by. Join Ira Wise for an exploration of both Jewish texts and current events. We will not be arguing the merits of one candidate or part over another. We *will* be discussing how we should conduct such conversations and remember the idea that we are all created in God's image and that we are all Americans. Bring your lunch!



**Adult Roundtable Returns!  
Thursday, October 4 at 12:30 p.m.**

Gloria Katz facilitates a discussion about current events for anyone who wants to go beyond the headlines. Join us the first Thursday of every month, and bring a sandwich, your opinion and an open mind.

**A Letter to My Child  
October 14 (Parents of children in  
grades K-3)**

**December 9 (Parents of children in  
grades 4-6)**

**9:45-11:45 a.m.**

Parents, join with Rabbi Schultz in the Pavilion for this one-day workshop where we will work to give you the tools, the resources, and the space to talk to one another and to craft a letter to your child(ren) about why Judaism matters to you and why it is important to you to pass this tradition to your child(ren).



**Rambam's Mishneh Torah  
Mondays, October 15-December 17 at  
Noon**

Back by popular demand, we will study Maimonides Mishneh Torah and his book of "De'ot," meaning laws of character, or self. All are welcome, no previous knowledge or Hebrew needed! Bring your lunch and join the conversation! This class will be team-taught by Rabbi Prosnit, Rabbi Schultz and Ira Wise.

# Making the Days Count..... From Page 8

to volunteer within Tel Aviv and the surrounding town of Bat Yam. I personally decided to take the community route and became a preschool teacher to refugee children for a few weeks.

During this time I experienced not one language barrier, but two, as the teachers I was working with did not just speak Hebrew, but also in some cases Eritrean, so English was their third language. Those few short weeks I spent with these children and women who had gone through so much seriously opened my eyes to the impact one person can have on another's life. As the weeks turned into days, and those days turned into hours, and finally those hours turned into minutes, I was followed to the door by these young children with tears in their eyes as they realized I was leaving. As I walked out the door on that last day, it hit me that not only had I made an impact on their lives, but they had made an impact on mine. During those few weeks I thought I hadn't made much of a difference in these

children's lives, as all I had done was play with them and keep them entertained for a few short hours a day. Yet even that simple act of reading and playing with them had allowed me to exemplify the Jewish value of *Tikkun Olam*. These children and women had taught me patience, understanding and how to look outside of yourself, thus showing that a lot can happen in such a short amount of time. I took this idea to heart as I changed gears to live in Jerusalem and start the education based half of my year.

Jerusalem was crazier than I could have imagined, as we spent every week traveling to different parts of Israel to learn about not only Judaism, but also Christianity and Islam. We investigated the Zionist narrative of Israel both inside the classroom and out in the world, allowing me to find my role in the story and who I am as a Zionist. I began to realize that although I am one person and I am only in Israel for a short amount of time, I can still make a difference, so I

began to make the days count instead of counting the days. I took every chance I had to make the most of my Israel experience.

At the end of February, myself and two other girls were given the opportunity to go to Bethlehem (in the West Bank) for two days. During this time we spoke with a young girl who at the age of 17 had become an active member of her community. She spent her weekends speaking to groups of teenagers, young adults, scholars – anyone who would listen, really – about the importance of communication and action by the next generation. I was so struck by her words that after two days I was questioning all of my beliefs and everything I had learned up until that point. What I was not questioning was what I needed to do next: I needed to make an impact, I needed to speak out. I asked any and every question I could possibly think of and began to learn more. I had realized that if one person could make such a difference on my life in two days, what could I do in three months or even four years?

We all have one voice, but if we use it wisely, one voice is all we need. Most of us will be on some type of university campus this coming fall, and there is one thing we all need to do, and that's speak up. In the words of Matt Damon's character in the movie, *We Bought a Zoo*, "It only takes 20 seconds of insane courage to make a difference." If that's true, imagine what four years can do.

So I'm asking each and every one of you: What are you going to use your 20 seconds of courage to do? Are you going to sign up for an Israel activism club or maybe start your own? Are you going to spend 20 seconds and write a tweet or email to a person in charge? Or are you simply going to spend 20 seconds talking to someone new and hear their opinions? Whatever it is, no matter how big or small, remember it can make a difference. So take these next four years and the rest of your life, and value the moments, because they can make a difference.



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Congregation B'nai Israel, founded in 1858, seeks to be a vibrant Reform synagogue dedicated to the perpetuation of Jewish life and values within the framework of contemporary American Judaism. We are a gateway to Judaism for all. The Congregation B'nai Israel Bulletin publishes monthly 11 times a year (except July). To submit an article, announcement or ad to the Bulletin, please contact Editor contact Editor Jack Kadden at [jkadden@cbibpt.org](mailto:jkadden@cbibpt.org). Submissions are due by the first day of the month preceding the publication month. We reserve the right to edit all submissions for length or style.

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(Please note that only contributions of \$10.00 or more will be acknowledged with a card and *Bulletin* listing.)

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**Jack and Sandy Germain**, in memory of Bertram Dunn.

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**Janet Jurow**, in honor of Harvey Levine on his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**Carol Krim**, in loving memory of husband, Michael Krim.

**Aleksey and Raisa Ledvich**, in memory of grandfather, Rahmiel Ledvich; in memory of mother, Emilia Ledvich; in memory of grandfather, Max Dovolsky; in memory of grandmother, Adel Dovolskaya.

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# Shabbat Service Schedule

(Fridays at 6:00 p.m. where indicated, preceded by an Oneg Shabbat at 5:30 p.m.)

## Friday, September 7

6:00 p.m. Service  
Torah Portion –  
Nitzavim-Vayelech, Deut.  
29:9-30:20  
Haftarah – Isaiah 61:10-  
63-9

## Saturday, September 8

8:00 a.m. Service  
9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast  
9:30 a.m. Torah Study  
9:30 a.m. Young Families Havurah  
11:00 a.m. Bar Mitzvah of Jonah  
Hotchkiss, son of Mark  
Hotchkiss and Marcia  
Cohen

## Friday, September 14

6:00 p.m. Service – Shabbat  
Shuvah  
Torah Portion – Vayelech,  
Deut. 31:1-30

Haftarah – Isaiah 55:6-  
56:8

## Saturday, September 15

8:00 a.m. Service  
9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast  
9:30 a.m. Torah Study

## Friday, September 21

6:00 p.m. Service  
Torah Portion – Haazinu,  
Deut. 32:1-52  
Haftarah – 11 Samuel  
22:1-51

## Saturday, September 22

8:00 a.m. Service  
9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast  
9:30 a.m. Torah Study  
9:30 a.m. Young Families Havurah  
11:00 a.m. Bat Mitzvah of Charlotte  
Yanni, daughter of  
Frederick and Courtney  
Yanni

## Friday, September 28

6:00 p.m. Service  
Torah Portion – Ha  
Hamoed Sukkot, Exod.  
33:12-34:26  
Haftarah – Ezekiel 38:18-  
39:7

## Saturday, September 29

8:00 a.m. Service  
9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast  
9:30 a.m. Torah Study  
9:30 a.m. Young Families Havurah  
11:00 a.m. Bar Mitzvah of Matthew  
Bronstein, son of Herb  
and Debbie Bronstein

## Zionist..... From Page 3

inevitably in discrimination. What does it tell you about Israel when the rights of all citizens were detailed prior to the purpose of the nation?

I know it violates a liberal shibboleth, but individuals have rights, groups do not. Groups have protections. So long as individual rights continue to be guaranteed, as they are through the other Basic Laws, nothing in the Nation State bill is a violation of democracy, much less “racist” or “apartheid.”

That does not mean there will be cases decided to support Israel’s Jewish character which will prompt again cries of the coming apocalypse and destruction of Israel’s democracy. But that’s because the Israel Supreme Court for decades used the Basic Laws defining individual rights to rule imperiously and often at the expense of Israel’s Jewish-national character.

It is unfortunate that the bill passed on a partisan basis because Tzipi Livni, now the Zionist Union opposition leader, submitted a version of this bill almost

a decade ago for a Knesset vote, which never happened. I cannot divine Prime Minister Netanyahu’s motivations, but I am always curious that people are shocked – shocked! – when politicians act like politicians. And all politicians, regardless of the aisle, are not guardians of moral values, but partisans seeking power and election.

I am puzzled by people willing to slice up Israel like hard salami in a deli to ensure Palestinian self-determination, yet they find so repugnant the idea of Jewish self-determination in Israel.

I am further puzzled by these same people warning that a Palestinian state is a demographic imperative to maintain Israel’s Jewishness, yet they cannot abide by the inclusion of that Jewishness in Israel’s Basic Laws.

Bumper-sticker Zionism is intellectually flaccid. Today, Israel’s identification with Jewish nationhood is attacked by large segments of the international community, Israeli Arabs, Palestinians, post-Zionist

Jews, and many non-Jewish Jews. Neither slogans nor reluctance will repel these attacks. Potent support is difficult, because in “respectable” circles, national identities are imaginary constructs leading inevitably to xenophobia and bigotry. Jewish nationalism is no different.

I’m not thrilled that Israel adopted the parliamentary system – too many parties with their own priorities, red lines, and pressure points. No single party has ever come close to achieving a majority, so coalitions are the rule, with inevitable tensions. But if you find your Zionism contingent on the actions of the democratically elected government, rather than supporting the existence of a Jewish state for the Jewish people and the political choices of diverse Jews living in the land, then it is perhaps time to reassess your relationship to Israel and to Jewish peoplehood.



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**Elaine Chetrit**



**Claire Baker**

## Help Honor Two Teachers

Join us on Friday, September 28, to honor two women who have made a huge difference in the lives of our Religious School students and the B'nai Israel Community.

During our Kabbalat Shabbat worship we will be honoring Elaine Chetrit and Claire Baker. Elaine and Claire have both retired from our Religious School faculty after teaching hundreds of students each and we want to celebrate and thank them.

They are not leaving us, though! Elaine will continue to teach Hebrew and Torah to adults, and Claire will continue to tutor

nearly all of our students as they prepare to become B'nai Mitzvah.

The evening begins with the Oneg Shabbat at 5:30 p.m., followed by services at 6:00 p.m. and then a celebratory dinner at 7:15 p.m.

We hope you will also join us for a celebratory dinner following services. The cost for dinner is \$20 per person (\$10.00 for 5- to 11-year-olds, no charge for 4 and under). For reservations, please contact Chris in the Temple office at (203) 336-1858 or [Chris@cbibpt.org](mailto:Chris@cbibpt.org).

## Mitzvah Mornings Are Back

Join us for our first Mitzvah morning of 2018-2019 on Sunday, September 23, when we head to B'nai Israel's cemetery at 117 Kings Highway East in Fairfield.

Over the past several decades, some of the headstones at the cemetery have endured nature's various elements. Rabbi Prosnit is delighted to hear that we have made it our mission to clean, preserve and restore them. It also will be a nice opportunity to work with others in the Temple community, and it is always a fun and rewarding morning.

We will meet directly at the cemetery at 9:30 a.m., where we will have bagels and coffee on hand for those there to help out. Children are encouraged to join us, too. While portable supplies will be used, we ask that if you own a power washer, please bring it as it would be helpful to have a few on hand as well.

If you have questions or wish to sign up to help, please contact Nina Silberman at [ninahv@aol.com](mailto:ninahv@aol.com) or Danielle Forma at [formadanielle@gmail.com](mailto:formadanielle@gmail.com).