

The Shofar



January 2016
Cheshvan-Kislev 5776

A Message from Rabbi Jordi Gendra



Planning Strategically for the New Year

As we prepare for the new year, the way CBT-BI is planning for the future can inform our personal preparation and development. First and foremost are the conversations among our

staff and board, along with consultations with certain members of the community, such as our listening campaign and congregational survey.

To get the most out of this new beginning, each of us should begin thinking about the goals and aspirations we wish to achieve in 2016. You can emulate the process of strategic planning in the synagogue, checking in with trusted members of family and others close to you who will give you honest and clear reflection. Conversations like these will help you hone your goals, which will be based on our core values.

We seek to grow spiritually, educationally, and socially in the company of others committed to Judaism as a source of life's wisdom (CBT-BI Vision Statement). The first goal of our synagogue speaks of connection, and this is at the heart of what this season is about. Over time, fault lines happen within our relationships, often due to poor communication, misunderstanding, or hurt feelings. This month, each of us can begin those conversations, which are often risky and fraught, to help heal wounds and reconnect with those most important to us. We can also use this time to step out bravely and think of new areas in which we wish to connect and engage, and that may even be through the synagogue, which is the life breath of the Jewish community.

CBT-BI is committed to balancing the need to maintain tradition while meeting the spiritual needs of contemporary Jews (CBT-BI Mission Statement). The second goal of our synagogue speaks about members having knowledge of our vision, mission, and values, and being able to articulate them. Essentially, CBT-BI

is a pluralist community, recognizing that ultimately there is only "One" (God) of which we are all part — but that there are as many ways as there are people to experience and express that sense of ultimate meaning or unity. At CBT-BI, we do so respecting the tradition of our ancestors, yet also knowing that to claim our place as Jews in the 21st century we need to approach life with the best of our values and make them ring true for now and the future. In a similar way, each of us can strive to know what our deepest values are, and how we can turn them into our mission in daily living.

CBT-BI's third goal concerns enhancing our communal spirituality. As a community we are blessed to have talented teachers and a school director, and committed members who have helped us to launch adult Hebrew learning, theater, choir and many other activities that go on in our little shul. Any of us who ever has sung in the shower or the car knows how good it can feel to let one's voice free. Our spiritual growth depends on our finding and expressing our voice. This is why *tefilah*, prayer, is one of the core practices of Judaism.

Our fourth goal as a community is to provide a fund for the future. In the post 2008 crisis and economic transition, nearly all commentators are suggesting the younger generations will not have the same wealth as their parents and grandparents. They also have greater expenses in housing and schooling for their children. These factors make it more difficult to support a synagogue. The elders of our generation, through gifts and bequests, can establish the fund for the future that will ensure that CBT-BI's enlightened approach to Judaism will exist for generations to come. And each of us, as we prepare for this New Year, should think personally of how we can give to others to help sustain our values. No wonder that *tzedakah* is a core practice in Judaism.

Making strategic plans is not easy, and fulfilling them is not guaranteed. Whether as a community or as individuals, to make our existence meaningful we need to be clear on our values and our vision so that we can check and ascertain our progress and growth in life. Wishing each and every member of our congregation health, peace, growth, and blessings in 2016.



From the President's Desk by Debbi Ret



As we begin 2016, many of us make New Year's resolutions. They could be the same ones we made back in September, or new ones. For those of us having trouble thinking of a way in which we can improve either our personal life or our community, we can start with our tradition

that the world exists because of three things, *Torah* (Jewish learning), *Avodah* (worship), and *Gemilut Hasadim* (acts of loving kindness). We at CBT-BI feel so strongly about this that we have adopted this as our Mission Statement. The first two, *Torah* and *Avodah*, are obvious and are what people think of first when they think synagogue. *Gemilut Hasadim* is easy to talk about, but sometimes hard to do.

What exactly are acts of loving kindness? Within our families and CBT-BI community, it can be as simple as a phone call to someone you haven't seen around in a while, a smile, a kind word. Within our local South Jersey community, it can be collecting food for local food pantries or going one step further and volunteering at the local food pantry or Family Promise. Within the larger communities of the United States and the world, we can speak out against injustice, write to our congressmen (or women), or find other ways in which we can make this world a better place for the generations who will follow us.

I periodically have congregants approach me with a wish that CBT-BI was more socially active. They want to do more than just talk or throw money at problems. While money is

what many social action organizations need more than anything else, some of our members feel that is too easy. They are happy that we are involved with the food pantries and Family Promise, but they are looking for something bigger. They read about stories of war, genocide, and refugees in other parts of the world. What can we do to help these people from here, in sheltered and stable little South Jersey? Area newspapers, both religious and secular, have run editorials by local Muslims speaking out against terrorism and local Jews speaking out against discrimination towards Muslims. We can help by adding our voices to the dialog. Recently, CBT-BI has been in touch with HIAS, a Jewish organization that helps refugees. We are hoping to arrange for a speaker to come here and let us know ways in which we can help.

In the meantime, we can continue with our own small acts of loving kindness. We can continue with the smiles, the kind words, collecting for food pantries, and donating money to causes that are meaningful to us.

In the words of the great sage and mystic, John Lennon:

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will live as one

Here's to a 2016 filled with peace and happiness for all.



Save the Date

- Friday, March 4, 5:30 PM: Shabbat Across America
- Saturday, March 19, 7:00 PM: Purim Shpiel
- Wednesday, March 23, 6:30 PM: Purim Megillah Reading
- Saturday, April 23, time TBA: Second Night Passover Seder at CBT-BI

A Message from Wendy Marder, Educational Director



As I write this, Chanukah is over and winter break is almost here. This year I even put the decorations away before the end of vacation, already planning Purim and Passover events. Even the d'var Torah I'm writing reminds me that we will be in the second book of the Torah, Exodus, when you read this.

Is it really true that time moves more quickly when you get older, or is it just that we are so busy?

We certainly are busy at CBT-BI religious school and considering that our school is only one of the many activities our students are involved in, it is impressive that most of our students have such good attendance. Sports and music, family events, and public school obligations are way more involved than when I went to Hebrew school three days a week. I had to give up ballet and Girl Scouts because it didn't fit in with my Hebrew school schedule. Frankly, I wasn't that good at ballet anyway, and I fulfilled my community service and sales experience through the synagogue and by selling Passover candy instead of Girl Scout cookies.

It is admirable that full-time working parents, who already spend all their free time chauffeuring their children from one activity to another—competitions, games, practice, doctors' appointments, etc.—still manage to get their children to and from religious school and even Shabbat services.

I know we are so thankful for all the help from the grandparents, friends, and carpools. It truly takes a village to raise our children, especially when you are dedicated to raising your children as knowledgeable and committed Jews who will grow up to make a difference in the world.

Those of you who also choose to help with our school and synagogue when you could be taking time out for yourself, show yet another amazing level of dedication. Thank you so much. Your children learn what they live and it is clear that we have a bright future ahead with such great example for them to follow.

As we move into the second half of the year, may our students' and your dedication continue.

We have many wonderful events coming up, aside from the already exciting events that take place each day at CBT-BI, like learning a new word, song, or how to read; making a connection with a classmate and/or teacher; finding meaning in a prayer or Torah reading; or just enjoying the peace that comes with being part of the same "family."

Keep these dates open:

January

- Sunday 1/17: Mitzvah Day during school.
- Saturday 1/23: Shabbat school.
- Friday 1/29: 5th & 6th grades lead services.
- Sunday 1/31: "Wrap Yourself in Prayer" workshop for 6th & 7th grades and their parents, as well as anyone else who would like to learn about tallit, tefillin, and prayer.

February

- Friday 2/5: 3rd graders and new students will receive their first prayer book (*Chag hasiddur*) and lead services along with the 4th graders.
- Sunday 2/14: no school—Presidents' Day weekend.
- Friday 2/19: 1st and 2nd grades will present a Shabbat dinner experience beginning at 5:45 PM.
- Saturday 2/27: Shabbat school and Torah workshop.

March

- Saturday 3/12: 5th & 6th grades will lead services.
- Saturday 3/19: Confirmation class will lead services.
- Saturday night 3/19: Purim shpiel.
- Sunday 3/20, 9:15 AM to noon: Purim carnival.
- Wednesday 3/23, 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM: Megillah reading in lieu of school but open to the entire community.

Enjoy, and thank you for your continued help and enthusiasm!



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Bikur Cholim Committee & Sisterhood Present:
“Community Resources for the Elderly
and Their Families”

Speaker: Rebecca Rosenau, MSW, LCSW

Associate Director of Senior Services from
Samost Jewish Family & Children's Service of Southern New Jersey (JFCS)

Tuesday, February 2 @ 12:30 PM

Please join us for a light lunch at 12:00 PM.

All are welcome to this free program.

Topics include:

- Senior related services
- Personal/companion/home health care
- Transportation
- Resource consultation for adult children
- Volunteer opportunities



RSVP to Myra Caplan at myrajcaplan@yahoo.com or
Jerri at (856) 589-6550 by **January 24th**

(Please feel free to submit any specific questions by the above date.)



115 E. Holly Avenue, Sewell, NJ 08080
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Bikur Cholim Revises Misheberach List Policy

The Bikur Cholim committee has written a new policy regarding the maintenance of the Misheberach list, which currently has more than 70 names. To keep the list current and relevant, any member who requested that someone's name be placed on the list should review this information every three months to determine if the person should remain on the list or be removed. Please contact Jerri or committee chair (myrajcaplan@yahoo.com) to let us know. Committee members will no longer be making quarterly phone calls; the decision will be up to the individual member.

A reminder will be included in the weekly announcements every three months (January, April, July, and October). If the person who placed the name on the list does not respond, the name will be removed. The name can stay on the list as long as necessary; the committee just requests that the information be reviewed so that it remains current.

In addition, minor children (under 18) should only be placed on the list by a parent or guardian or with the permission of the parent or guardian. This policy will allow members to have more control over the list.

- Myra Caplan, committee chair

Sisterhood News by Luba Veytsman



Our Sisterhood had a very busy and fun last two months of 2015. In November we held our annual Chanukah Bazaar. Many customers were attracted to the big display of items from our gift shop. We also invited different vendors, who provided a variety of items and gifts. This event was a big success

as our congregants and friends shopped, shopped, and shopped! A big thank you to all who helped us set up, sell the various items, and clean up after the event.

Also in November, Sandy Lewis attended a Women's League event, where we received an award for achieving our goal for the Torah Fund for 2014-2015. Thank you to Sandy and everybody who helped us reach our goal!

We held our Vodka and Latkes paid-up membership dinner on December 10 in our synagogue. This event was very well attended by our sisterhood members, guests from the Women's League, and Rabbi Jordi. We worked tirelessly to make delicious latkes, soup, and salads under the direction of our great chefs, Ellen Brown and Sharon Kass. (There were many requests for the recipes, so please pass them along, Ellen!) And, of course, desserts included jelly filled donuts and sweet yogurt. Our very own Iris Nadel and Randi Wolf provided musical entertainment. Many of us even sang along with them! I received many comments regarding how

much everyone enjoyed the evenings. Thank you so much to all who helped make it such a big success and fun night!

Sisterhood also presented Chanukah gifts to all the Hebrew school children. Thank you to Lori Samilson for ordering the gifts.

We also launched a new fundraiser — a knish sale. We hope you were able to purchase some of these delicious items.

Our next event is an introduction to Kabbalah and how it relates to Jewish culture. This event will take place January 18 at 7 PM at the synagogue. Please come out and join us for what should be a fun and enlightening evening.

On February 2, the Bikkur Cholim Committee and Sisterhood will sponsor a luncheon and seminar on community resources for the elderly and their families. (See Page 4 for more information.)

I look forward to seeing you at our events!

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Meet Our New Members

Barbara & Rebekah Wilen

Barbara and her daughter Rebekah live in Deptford. Barbara is an accountant, and Rebekah is a fourth-grader at Oak Valley School. Rebekah plays softball, and she is learning to play the trumpet.

They decided to join CBTBI not only because it is close to home but also because of the warm welcome they received from our congregation, Sisterhood members, and staff members Jerri Gerace and Wendy Marder.

Rebekah was invited to participate in the synagogue's youth group, and she is very excited about the fun activities and making new friends!



Judy and Richard Chait

You'll recognize Judy by her Brooklyn accent, which she has yet to shake, even though she's been living in South Jersey for quite a while. Richard is originally from Philly.

Judy is retired, and we are fortunate to have her volunteering to teach our "Read Hebrew America" classes. Richard is a transportation manager at Demountable Concepts, Inc. in Glassboro.

Together, the couple has 20 grandchildren! They are avid readers, and Judy loves opera.

Judy and Richard joined CBT-BI because they really like our Rabbi and our congregation.

Text and photos by Randi Wolf

The Shofar

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editor@cbtbi.org

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Congregation B'nai Tikvah-Beth Israel
115 East Holly Avenue, Sewell, NJ 08080
(856) 589-6550 • info@cbtbi.org • www.cbtbi.org

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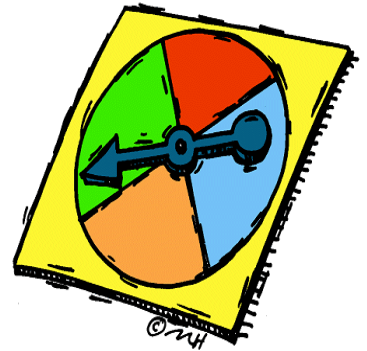
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Winter Warm-Up Social Event

Sunday, January 24th / 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM



Games, Crafts, Music
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For more information:
Contact Jerri at (856) 589-6550



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Now Under New Management: CBT-BI's Judaica Shop

Looking for a gift for a bar or bat mitzvah student, something unique to bring to a housewarming, or a gift for a special occasion of any kind? Please consider the CBT-BI Judaica Shop before buying elsewhere. New shop manager Sharon Richman (pictured) can help you find just the right item you're looking for. In addition, parents can order personalized b'nai mitzvah kippot from Sharon (srichman412@gmail.com).

The gift shop is a year-round fundraiser that allows Sisterhood to make generous donations to the synagogue annually.



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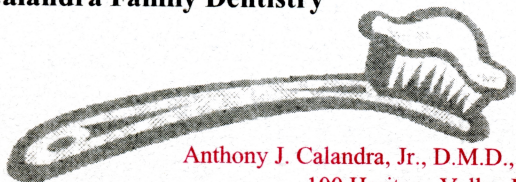
The holidays are over, but the scrip program keeps going. Didn't get everything on your list? Now is a good time to take advantage of the sales and shop for yourself. Everyone runs after-holiday sales, and I still have lots of cards in stock, ready for purchase. Whether you like Macy's or Marshalls, Sports Authority or Dicks, Target or Walmart, I have something for your shopping needs. Ring in the new year and make a resolution to support the scrip program.

Contact me with any questions or to place any order. Remember, you can also get supermarket scrip from Debbie Brown (881-4336), Diane Rosen (589-4472), and Diane Shapiro (740-0081).

- Judy (256-0550 or eyemstuk@verizon.net)



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