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Iyar/Sivan 5784



Temple Beth Shalom - Needham, Massachusetts



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From the Editorial Board

Students often wonder why colleges eschew the use of "graduation" and declare the ceremonial end of schooling as "commencement." Their goal for four years has, after all, been to graduate. The *siyyum*, or completion, of our Torah Scroll, was, similarly, a goal. And a b. mitzvah, for those studying toward that moment, is a ceremonial and celebratory finish line. Most milestones feel like endpoints, when in fact they mark beginnings. In this *Scroll*, we celebrate the commencement of having our new Torah and of poignant journeys in the lives of some of our members who, as adults, began adulthood anew according to the tenets of Judaism. To all those celebrating commencements, whatever goal you have achieved, we wish you mazel tov and happy trails to your next steps in life.

And with this *Scroll*, we commence a two-month publication hiatus. See you in September!

Let Us Hear from You - and/or Join Us!

- We always welcome your input and help. Are there articles you'd like to see included or topics that should be covered? Let us know!
- Might you like to write an article? How about joining us to do editing or layout? Want to help with advertising?

Please email scroll@tbsneedham.org with your ideas, suggestions, or offers to join in the fun of producing the *Scroll*!

By Joni Burstein on behalf of the Editorial Board

FIGHTING ANTISEMITISM

"Those who seek to eliminate Jews, seek to eliminate freedom. Antisemitism is a sickness that destroys all who harbour it. Hate harms the hated but it destroys the hater. There is no exception."

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks (*z"I*) - Chief Rabbi, United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth (UK), 1991-2013



Services in June

All services will be both in person and online for the month of June. An * denotes in person only.

Please check the TBS website and emails for livestream links.

SATURDAY, JUNE 1 (24 lyar 5784)

Torah: B'chukotai Lev. 26:3 - 27:34 8:30 AM Shabbat Morning Service 9:00 AM Torah Study* 9:15 AM Finding Our Jewish Values in the Torah B. Mitzvah: Zachary Maciejczak B. Mitzvah: Ellie Popkin

FRIDAY, JUNE 7 (2 Sivan 5784)

6:15 PM Erev Shabbat Service

SATURDAY, JUNE 8 (2 Sivan 5784)

Torah: B'midbar Num. 1:1 - 4:20 8:30 AM Shabbat Morning Service 9:00 AM Torah Study* 9:15 AM Finding Our Jewish Values in the Torah B. Mitzvah: Madison Rishikof B. Mitzvah: Levi Jacobs and Naomi Dabuzhsky

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12 (6 Sivan 5784)

7:00 AM Shavuot Morning service, Yizkor

FRIDAY, JUNE 14 (9 Sivan 5784)

6:15 PM Erev Shabbat Service

SATURDAY, JUNE 15 (9 Sivan 5784)

Torah: *Naso* Num. 4:21 - 7:89 8:30 AM Shabbat Morning Service 9:00 AM Torah Study*

9:15 AM Finding Our Jewish Values in the Torah B. Mitzvah: Benjamin Fernandez and Benjamin Lazarus

FRIDAY, JUNE 21 (16 Sivan 5784)

6:15 PM Erev Shabbat Service

SATURDAY, JUNE 22 (16 Sivan 5784)

Torah: *B'haalot'cha* Num. 8:1 - 12:16 8:30 AM Shabbat Morning Service 9:00 AM Torah Study*

9:15 AM Finding Our Jewish Values in the Torah B. Mitzvah: Olivia Levingston and Zaccary Levingston

FRIDAY, JUNE 28 (23 Sivan 5784)

5:30 PM Tot Shabbat Service 6:15 PM Erev Shabbat Service

SATURDAY, JUNE 29 (23 Sivan 5784)

Torah: *Sh'lach L'cha* Num. 13:1 - 15:41 8:30 AM Shabbat Morning Service 9:00 AM Torah Study* 9:15 AM Finding Our Jewish Values in the Torah

Please join the TBS Community for Minyan

- Monday and Thursday mornings at 7:00 AM in person, in the Sanctuary.
- Tuesday through Thursday evenings at 6:45 PM online only. Zoom links are published in the "TBS This Week" email.

Committee Meetings in June - Stay Involved!

Committees not listed will not meet formally this month.

Committee Name

Adult Learning Archives Brotherhood Board Communications Scroll Editorial Board

Date and Time

Wed. June 5, 7:45 PM Fri. June 7, 10:30 AM Tue. June 11, 7:15 PM Wed. June 19, 7:15 PM Tue. June 25, 1:00 PM

Email Contact for Information

adultlearning@tbsneedham.org archives@tbsneedham.org brotherhood@tbsneedham.org communications@tbsneedham.org scroll@tbsneedham.org

Please check with the email contact in case of a change in date and for meeting location.

Welcome New Members

Maria Berkman and Paul Smith and Logan (9) and Sasha (6) Leslie and Daron Forman and Meira (17) and Shayla (17) Mark and Kimberly Kaplan and Ariana (6) Jennie and Max Ortwein and Finn (3) Jennifer and Adam Rogowin and Cameron (10), Gavin (8), and Ellorie (5) Seth and Mary Tenenbaum Elinor Whisman

From Our Board of Trustees

95% Joyous and 5% Pretty Good

By Wendy Gutterson, Congregational President



Dear Friends,

It is hard for me to believe that this is my final *Scroll* column as Temple Beth Shalom congregational president. It's been twenty-four months since I first wrote about what it means to count the Omer, to count in a community, to count on each other. I hope you feel that you have been able to count on me to lead our board, to partner with our professional staff, and to represent you in a way that is respectful, considerate, and fully in keeping with our community's guiding principles.

Being Temple president, *your* Temple president, has truly been an honor. Many of you have heard me say "It's 95% joyous and 5% pretty good." This is true in large part because it's 95% teamwork, and our team is simply fantastic. I'm proud of what we have accomplished. I'm grateful for the guidance and support I've received, and for the participation of so many whose professional efforts and volunteerism shape our community. And, if you are wondering about the 5% pretty good, I can honestly say that those long hours now seem like minutes, and challenges now feel like opportunities – good opportunities to grow, to change, to do good — for and with each other.

The TBS Scroll is certainly a labor of love. Thank you to the hardworking team who put it together each month, tracking down articles, generating great themes, and producing a monthly work of art. I am extending a very special thank you to Steve Sherry and Joni Burstein, whose kindness and patience are matched only by their talent.

I'd also like to extend my deep gratitude to the extraordinary TBS board of trustees. While I do love that you show up on time, it is the work we've done and the conversations we've had (including the parking lot conversations) that I'm most proud of. You ask good questions, you engage in thoughtful discussion, and you take the role seriously. I've appreciated the laughter and the spirit of camaraderie. I thank you for being the best board imaginable. And I'd like to offer a special shout out to Loren Shapiro. As executive vice president, Loren has been my valued thought partner and a trusted friend. Thank you for all you have

done and will continue to do. I am so looking forward to seeing what comes next under your leadership.

There are other special people whose support has been absolutely invaluable. Thank you to Ina Glasberg and Peggy Gassman. You have inspired my leadership journey, and I am grateful for your support. Jeff Shapiro, I thank you for saying "yes" every time I call. Your friendship is important to my entire family. And Bernice Sue Behar, many years ago I learned that partnering with you on any project will ensure success. I appreciate your wisdom and your friendship in equal measure.

For these past two years, I've spent almost every Wednesday morning with Rabbi Todd and Rabbi Jay. We've planned, we've problem-solved, we've laughed (and on occasion cried). Rabbi Jay, working closely with you is like taking a graduate course combining leadership and kindness. Rabbi Todd, your partnership is a gift that continually demonstrates what it means to put heart and soul into everything you do. I love how each of you makes me feel that you have all the time in the world, despite the reality that you are both incredibly busy. I will miss those meetings more than you might imagine. Thank you both for making me a better leader.

There are so many in our congregation who make Temple Beth Shalom special and make being congregational president filled with love. To our Leadership Council members, our senior directors, Rabbi Elyse and Cantor DJ, I thank you all for the contributions you make each day and for making our community warm and inviting. I would certainly need more than this space to thank you individually and fully with the praise you deserve.

Finally, thanks to Sam, Tzipora, and Adam for all the joy you bring into my life and the lives of so many. I hope each of you can recognize the difference you make for those around you. And, of course, thank you to David, who had a vision of what joining a temple might look like and why *this temple* was the right place for us. While I'm not sure my role as community leader was exactly part of your plan, I am deeply grateful. Thank you for always believing in me and being my biggest supporter.

With deep appreciation to all. L'Shalom,

Wendy

B. Mitzvah

Zachary Maciejczak, Saturday, June 1

School: Pollard Middle School

Interests: Zach loves playing basketball and going fishing.

Mitzvah Project: Zach has been volunteering at Needham's Community Farm, which provides fresh

fruits and vegetables for families who can't afford to buy them.

Ellie Popkin, Saturday, June 1

School: Pollard Middle School

Interests: Ellie loves sports - especially basketball and soccer.

Mitzyah Project: Ellie is collecting money for the Ellie Fund, in memory of her grandmother Ellie, to

help breast cancer patients.

Madison Rishikof, Saturday, June 8

School: Kennedy Middle School

Interests: Madison enjoys singing, acting in theater productions, baking, and art.

Mitzvah Project: Madison spent time and connected with the elderly while working on art projects

together.

Levi Jacobs, Saturday, June 8

School: Pollard Middle School

Interests: Levi loves playing baseball, basketball, working out, and spending time with his family and

friends.

Mitzvah Project: Levi helped his summer baseball team of 12-year-olds, EMass All-Stars, run their winter baseball clinics and help with spring tryouts.

Naomi Dabuzhsky, Saturday, June 8

School: Pollard Middle School

Interests: Naomi loves to play baseball and her bass clarinet; Naomi also enjoys crafts like embroidery

and sewing.

Mitzvah Project: Naomi organized an equipment drive for a local charity that provides sports equipment to low-income girls in the Boston area.

Benjamin Fernandez, Saturday, June 15

School: Fessenden School

Interests: Benjamin is a huge sports and video game fan, always ready to shoot hoops, throw baseballs,

or play Fortnite.

Mitzvah Project: Ben volunteered at Cradles to Crayons, helping homeless and low-income children access essential items.

Benjamin Lazarus, Saturday, June 15

School: Pollard Middle School

Interests: Benjamin loves soccer, flag football, tennis, and skiing. He enjoys playing video games and

his summers at Camp Walt Whitman.

Mitzvah Project: Ben hosted a clothing drive for Cradles to Crayons and volunteered at the organization's giving factory.

B. Mitzvah continued...

Olivia Levingston, Saturday, June 22

School: High Rock Middle School

Interests: Olivia likes to ski and snowboard, and she loves gymnastics.

Mitzvah Project: Olivia completed a course and is training and puppy sitting dogs who are learning to

help visually impaired people.

Zaccary Levingston, Saturday, June 22

School: Pollard Middle School

Interests: Zaccary likes to play soccer, do parkour, and hang with his dog, and he loves to ski and

snowboard.

Mitzvah Project: Zaccary completed a course and is participating in training/raising puppies who will

be service dogs for the blind.

To participate in B. Mitzvah services, join us in person in the Sanctuary, or check your Shabbat email for Vimeo links.

June Highlights

ConNEXTions Red Sox Game

Sunday, June 2, 1:30-5:30 PM, offsite

ConNEXTions is going to Fenway Park and watching the Red Sox take on the Detroit Tigers! Grab your tickets before they run out by registering. We look forward to spending a day at the ballpark with our ConNEXTions Community! Temple Beth Shalom is subsidizing the cost of this event to reduce the price for all. If you require additional financial assistance in order to participate, please be in touch with Rabbi Todd at tmarkley@tbsneedham.org.

TBS ConNEXTions ("connections") is a sub-group of the TBS community focused on engaging adults in their 40's-60's in Jewish life on their own terms and for their own benefit. While, for many, early years of involvement in the community are marked by time spent for and with children, there comes

a time to ask, "What's next?" This group provides adults opportunities for fun, time with friends, learning, and doing good in our world. Want to learn more or get involved? Contact us at connextions@tbsneedham.org.

Register: t-b-s.me/redsox Cost: \$30 per ticket

Contact: Craig Lustig and Lori Shaer at connextions@tbsneedham.org



Gardens in New England

Tuesday, June 4, 7:15-8:45 PM, TBS

Jana Milbocker, a local garden designer, will present a slide program on special gardens to visit in New England. She has written a valuable guide to gardens and nurseries throughout New England that you can take with you as you view beautiful gardens in the area. Check out her website: EnchantedGardensDesign.com. Hope to see you there!

Cost: Garden Club members: free. Guests: \$10.

Contact: Carol Gershman at gardenclub@tbsneedham.org



Sisterhood Un-Board Meeting

Wednesday, June 5, 7:15-9:00 PM, offsite

Let's meet for cocktails and discuss ideas, give feedback from the past year, and make suggestions for the upcoming year. ALL WELCOME!

Register: t-b-s.me/unboard

Contact: TBS Sisterhood at sisterhood@tbsneedham.org



Brotherhood BBQ

Thursday, June 6, 6:00-9:00 PM, offsite

See old friends panim el panim (face to face), make new friends, and enjoy a traditional backyard BBQ with all the fixin's. Beer and soft drinks will be served, all to the accompaniment of musical entertainment by Theophonic Haze, aka The Official Purim Band. Bring your guitar, mandolin, banjo, or zither if you want to sit in with the band!



Register: t-b-s.me/brotherhoodbbq

Contact: Brotherhood at brotherhood@tbsneedham.org



Jewish Boston: A Ride through History, with Daniel Dain

Sunday, June 9, 9:30-11:30 AM, TBS

In his new work, The History of Boston, local author Daniel Dain explores the rich panorama of the city's political, ethnic, and social history, from the arrival of the Puritans through the American Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, the civil rights and other political movements, to the dynamic cityscape of today.

In his visit to TBS, Daniel will focus specifically on the Jewish aspects of Boston's history, including such topics as the first Jewish colonialists, the immigration of Central European Jews in the 1840s, the establishment of the first synagogues and cemeteries, Jewish settlement in the "South End" and the growth of the Garment District, the immigration wave of the 1880s, the lewish exodus from Mattapan

and Dorchester to the outer suburbs, and the arrival of Jews from the former Soviet Union. He will also discuss the history of antisemitism in Boston, including the late 1930s diatribes of Father Coughlin (which led to violent, local attacks by the Christian Front), Jewish/Christian reconciliation, and the latest protests against Israel on area campuses.

Daniel Dain, Esq., was born in Boston and grew up in Newton. He writes and lectures widely on land use law and urban planning and is the founder and president of the law firm Dain Torpy. Among his many professional and civic associations, he is a board member of the Vilna Shul in Boston. He lives in Needham with his wife and two children.

Brought to you by the TBS Antisemitism Awareness Initiative and the Adult Learning Committee. Refreshments will be served.

Register: t-b-s.me/historyride

Contact: ASAI at asai@tbsneedham.org



Sunday, June 9, 7:30-9:00 PM, TBS and online

Koleinu, Boston's Jewish Community Chorus, returns to Temple Beth Shalom in concert with Cantor DJ Fortine! This season, Koleinu is featuring new repertoire and past favorites from women composers, including TBS's own Sarah Riskind. Join us for an exciting and spirited evening of music and community!

Register: t-b-s.me/koleinu

Cost: \$18/ticket in person, \$15/livestream Contact: Jessica Baim at jbaim@tbsneedham.org







June Highlights continued...

Annual Congregational Meeting

Thursday, June 13, 7:30 PM, TBS

Celebrate our accomplishments of the past year and look with excitement to the year ahead! We will honor the leadership contributions of our retiring elected officers, trustees, and nominating committee members; present the proposed new TBS officers, trustees, and nominating committee members; and then vote on these positions. We will also review and vote on the minutes from the June 2023 Annual Meeting, and present and vote on the budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

Register: t-b-s.me/annualmeeting

Contact: Joelle Schatz at jschatz@tbsneedham.org

Recurring Events

Finding Our Jewish Values in the Torah

Saturdays, June 1, 8, 15, 22, 9:15-10:15 AM, TBS

Each week we will focus on a single Jewish moral or ethical value found in that week's *parshah* (Torah portion). These will include, but not be limited to Justice, Compassion, Environmental Ethics, and Business Ethics. A variety of rabbinic sources will enrich our exploration as we seek to apply each week's value to our lives today.

Join us in person at TBS or drop in online at t-b-s.me/findingvalues

Contact: Jessica Baim at jbaim@tbsneedham.org



Panim el Panim/Face to Face - A Special Discussion Series with Israelis

Sunday, June 2, 12:00-1:00 PM, Online

For many years, Congregation Mevasseret Zion (CMZ), a progressive community outside Jerusalem, has been Temple Beth Shalom's "sister congregation." When this program was originally created, the ongoing topic for conversation was to be the Israeli judicial reform proposals. With the current crisis in Israel, we are now supporting our Israeli partners as they struggle during war. Each month, we gather via Zoom in a conversation facilitated by Rabbi Jay and Rabbi Alona Nir Keren of CMZ.

Register: t-b-s.me/panim

Contact: Rabbi Perlman at jperlman@tbsneedham.org

Israeli Dancing

Mondays, June 3, 10, 17, 24, 7:00-8:30 PM, TBS

Join Emily Perlman for a wonderful Israeli dance experience. Israeli dance is a great way to engage the culture of Israel and the Jewish people through music and movement. This is an intermediate level class for those who have some Israeli dance experience. Those who are willing to learn by watching others are also encouraged to attend.

Cost: \$5 per session, paid when you attend.

Contact: Emily Perlman at eperlman@tbsneedham.org



Breakfast Food and Bag Lunch Drive-Up Collection for Homeless Shelters

Friday, June 7, 9:15-9:45 AM, TBS parking lot

We look forward to your participation as we donate bag lunches and breakfast foods to homeless shelters in the Father Bill's network of shelters in Brockton. This is a great project to do individually or as a family!

Participate in this mitzvah every month and help us provide 100 bagged lunches and lots of breakfast foods needed to help feed guests at these homeless shelters!

Donate any of the following: bag lunches, bottles of water, juice boxes, condiments, and breakfast items including muffins, individual-size cereal boxes, yogurts, fruit cups, or ground coffee. We will be ready to unload your items from your car as you drive up.

Can't make it to the collection? No problem! Non-perishable donations may be dropped at a Needham address prior to the collection day by emailing us and signing up for your donation. Thank you for helping to feed the stranger.

Register: t-b-s.me/baglunch

Contact: Linda Hill at socialaction@tbsneedham.org



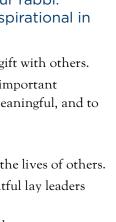
Below are excerpts from Rabbi Jay's 2002 statement as a candidate for becoming our rabbi. Twenty years in, his words are as descriptive of his past twenty years as they were aspirational in describing what he hoped to achieve.

- I became a rabbi because I believe that Judaism is a gift, and I want my life's work to be sharing that gift with others.
- I consider myself to be blessed to be a rabbi, to be invited to share in some of the most precious and important moments in people's lives, to be a part of the creation of worship experiences that are vibrant and meaningful, and to be able to foster a greater warmth within a community.
- Through sermons, I try to speak both to people's hearts and minds.
- I value personal relationships. Through them, we have the ability to genuinely make a difference in the lives of others.
- I see my rabbinate as a partnership, one in which I am privileged to work with dedicated and thoughtful lay leaders and colleagues.
- I was once taught that the most successful rabbis are those who approach their work with openness, humor, imagination, sensitivity, and integrity. It is my hope that that throughout my rabbinic career, these qualities will continue to define all that I do.

Rabbi Todd's words to Rabbi Jay summarize our collective TBS experience:

could (tell) story after story of the ways that Rabbi Jay Perlman has blessed this community for over two decades. I could go on ... about programs and prayers, sermons, and songs, about minds illuminated and souls stirred, about steadied hands through communal crises, and about loving presence at precious lifecycle moments... But I don't need to tell those stories ... because every single soul here ... can tell their own unique versions for themselves... I came to Temple Beth Shalom for many reasons but most of all because of you." R' Todd

We are grateful for Rabbi Jay's living up to his aspirations every day in every way. Here's to the next twenty years!



Mayim Tamid: After-School Care, Jewish Learning, and So Much More!

By Liron Riess, Sammy Altman, and Rachel Wolfeiler

Mayim Tamid is TBS's Jewish after–school Program for grades K-4. Unlike our Mayim program, which meets once a week, our Mayim Tamid program meets five days a week (Monday-Friday), so children spend much more time with us over the course of a year. With that extra time, Mayim Tamid goes beyond simply offering after-school care and seamlessly blends the rich Jewish curriculum of our Mayim program with additional enriching extracurricular activities.

At the heart of Mayim Tamid's core practices is enrichment, which offers a distinctive Jewish education experience. Educators delve beyond the regular Mayim curriculum to follow the children's interests, explore related themes, and engage more deeply with Jewish traditions and communal life. Children's inquiries inspire educators to integrate fresh perspectives and materials, fostering a love for learning and sense of relevance. Enrichment may encompass deep dives into new subjects, leadership opportunities for older students, or the exploration of additional resources on familiar topics. Even outdoor play becomes a gateway to enrichment, when children observe natural phenomena or hone their skills. A few examples of Mayim Tamid enrichment include creating jewelry for tzedakah, crafting Shabbat boxes, enhancing TBS spaces, chanting a prayer while watching an eclipse, and developing Torah-themed board games.



When the Needham Public Schools have an Early Release Day every other week, Mayim Tamid children arrive early to TBS, offering a prime opportunity for extracurricular engagement. During this time, a special form of enrichment takes center stage: *chugim* (electives). *Chugim* sessions allow educators to share their passions directly with learners, who rank their preferences based on interest. Each *chug* rotation spans three sessions, allowing for skill development and project creation,



Purim Shpiel 5784: Yacht Rock! And Rabbi Todd Rocks!

In March, 250 TBS members enthusiastically greeted the return of the Purim Shpiel — after a four-year hiatus. We sailed away on the S.S. Esther to the smooth sounds of the late 70s and early 80s, and laughed along at the hilarious parody songs and the retelling of the Purim story. Mazel tov to the Purim Band (Rob Sutherland, Eric Luskin, Even Metter, and Rabbi Todd), a loyal crew on a successful voyage!

We also honored Rabbi Todd and the Markley Family for 18 years of service to Temple Beth Shalom. As it was said, "We are overjoyed to celebrate Rabbi Todd's depth of heart, his thoughtfulness of mind, and his ever outstretched hands to help. Our congregation has been joyfully transformed by Rabbi Todd's leadership, extraordinary creativity, genuine warmth, and seemingly boundless spirit."





Becoming a Jewish Adult... as an Adult

The *Scroll* asked members who have become B. Mitzvah as adults to tell us about their journeys.

Judy Chudnofsky

I was the 7th child in an Orthodox family. Yiddish was spoken in the home, and it was not encouraged for girls to learn Hebrew. The ritual of bat mitzvah did not exist. My Jewish education consisted of walking to shul with my father, listening to the men davening and the cantor's voice leading the men in prayer.

Years later, I married Jason, moved to Needham, and began our search to join a temple. Temple Aliyah (at that time) would not allow girls to formally become a bat mitzvah. Having two daughters, I knew giving them a Jewish education was of utmost importance ... so we joined TBS. Our daughters were bat mitzvahed and confirmed.

Time moved on and the missing pieces in my Jewish education became more apparent. I asked TBS to initiate an adult bat mitzvah class I was turned down The next year I asked again.

Five women — Helene Stone, Sylvia Jaffe, Judy Shapiro, Brenda Levy, and Anita Glickman — agreed to go on this scary journey with me. My daughters' Hebrew teacher, Joyce Shufro, agreed to teach for the two years at no charge.

And so the first TBS adult bat mitzvah class was approved and set in motion!

We studied together for two years, we became b'nai mitzvah, we had a large congregational oneg to celebrate ... but it wasn't enough. With Joyce Shufro's love, we spent another two years reading the Torah in English from cover to cover!

Our small study group had achieved much more than our initial dream, and Joyce Shufro was retiring. Sadly, this journey was finished.

But for me the door had only cracked open. I took *Meah* 100 hours (two years) of Jewish learning through Hebrew College. I joined the board at Temple Beth Shalom and the JCC, became a participant in The Daughters of Abraham, and then I met Anita Diamant and became a mikvah guide at Mayyim Hayyim for seven years. I tried to guide women through both happy and sad times.

So what is the meaning of an adult bat mitzvah?

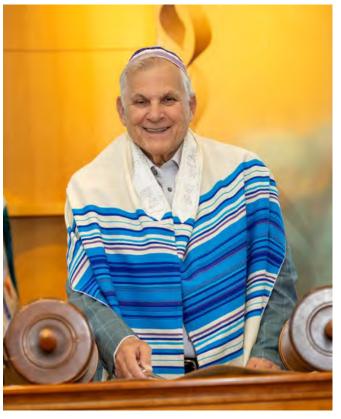
It can be a doorway leading to a room filled with countless learning opportunities.

It can give anyone the ability to see what can be achieved as a Jewish adult.

It can give anyone the tools to share what you learn with others ... and I know this is true because it helped me to grow into the Jewish person I am today.

Thank you to Temple Beth Shalom, to the brave women who joined me on this journey, and especially to Joyce Shufro who gave us four years of her time, her wisdom, and her love.

Harry Cohen



It is a sunny Shabbat day in April 1943, and World War II is raging in Europe, North Africa and the Pacific. At the West Philadelphia Hebrew School, a skinny thirteen-year-old boy stands at a podium, a portable ark behind him, and he faces a congregation of 30 people. He is not happy and is nervous because he can hardly speak—his sore throat, which began a week ago, is now full-blown laryngitis. On this day of his bar mitzvah, there is no way he will be able to chant his Torah portion or his haftarah—the best he can do is croak his way through the service. He hopes that someday redemption would come to replace this unpleasant scenario.

Fast forward 80 years to 2023, when Harry Cohen, now living in Needham, chooses to celebrate his bar mitzvah as an adult. He moved here in 2021 to be close to his daughter, Erica Kaplan, and joined TBS, where she has been a member for many years. Erica did all the work necessary to prepare for a private service and luncheon at TBS; with the help of Maeve Connolly of TBS, arrangements were made for a lovely repast after the service — with music, a photographer, and a slide show.

This time, there was no laryngitis, and Harry was well prepared to chant his portions and lead the service before a group of about 70 relatives and friends. Yes, redemption had finally come.

Harry is grateful for the assistance of Rabbi Jay, Cantor DJ, and tutor Sheira Rosenfield in helping him to prepare for one of the most joyful and satisfying events of his adult life.

Mary Kraft

Growing up in an Orthodox congregation, I didn't have a bat mitzvah as a child. In fact, since I wasn't going to have one, my parents didn't send me to Hebrew school. As an adult, I became fascinated learning more and more about Judaism, and joined an adult women's b. mitzvah class at Kerem Shalom in Concord. I was thrilled to have the opportunity to be called to the bimah with my husband the day before our wedding, where we shared my bat mitzvah and his *Aufruf* (being called up for an aliyah before the wedding).



Becoming a Jewish Adult continued...

Beth Pinals



In 2005, our annual winter trip to Florida held a different flow than usual — less wildlife by canoe and horse, fewer trips to conservation centers housing rescued sea turtles and protected alligators, fewer family and friend visits ... and instead more walks on the beach chanting my parsha (Torah portion) over and over. I was preparing for my adult bat mitzvah, and these walks somehow helped me notice the layered blues of the ocean, the textures of the endless lines of seashells, and the vastness of the sky in a different way. The natural wonder resonated with the timelessness and presence of Torah making this a version of hamakom — a sacred space where I could enter into the centuries of our people and find God.

As I was immersing myself in life and Jewish leadership, I simultaneously decided to study Torah more actively, both at TBS and with another special rabbi, Alan Ullman, who serves as a guide for people's Torah journeys. I had been moved at how every single time I studied a Torah portion, it felt applicable to some circumstance, decision, or milestone in my life. It spoke to me about how to navigate challenge, how to put structure in place, how to support others, and how to love. After years of this experience, the revelation that emerged was that if we are open to these Torah lessons and to God, our lenses and worlds can greatly expand and transform.

Beyond the time I was spending at TBS and in other Jewish learning programs, a mobilizing factor for this step was the growing awareness of the gaps in my own early Jewish education. At my vibrant synagogue in a suburb of NYC, I was enthusiastic about the clergy, the music, the learning (even Hebrew, which I studied

for three years), and especially the special friendships that were nurtured there. When in 6th grade, the girls were told that only boys would become b'nai mitzvah (the bat mitzvah ceremony didn't become commonplace in some areas of the US until well into the 1970s and '80s), it seemed "normal," despite how unacceptable that is through today's gender equity lens. I simply continued on with learning, through a trip to Israel, NFTY activities, Confirmation, and beyond. While becoming a bat mitzvah, a daughter of the commandments, was not an option as a young teen, it later re-emerged as a ,window of opportunity. Studying Torah as an adult, as well as being immersed in the development and leadership of our then Temple Tots program, Sisterhood, social justice and ultimately governance were all part of the inspiration for the planning of this lifecycle moment.

I studied *B'chukotai* – in Leviticus – searching for a modern interpretation of a God who seemed both withholding if instructions were ignored, and generous in offering land, security, and a good life if we were faithful. The Israelites were on the edge of the promised land, ambivalent about moving ahead. In preparing, I too wrestled with the dualities of animosity and generosity, the failures and the sparks of faith, the comfort of the familiar and the calling to venture into new spaces. And I studied the Shabbat and special prayers of our people, gaining new understanding of their relevance to daily life. Ultimately with Rabbi Jay's counsel, I created a *Simchat Brit* – A Celebration of Covenantal Life and Living – and had the privilege of chanting from Torah and praying beside those I loved deeply. I experienced discomfort and risk, and on the flip side, wonder that could take me to new places in my leadership, work, and personal endeavors. Most of all, I hoped that this milestone and all of the learning, connection, and service that accompanied it could not only form a gateway for deepening my community contribution, but also serve as a model for my children, who in the coming years would get to consider their own values and ways of living Jewishly ... or simply living.

Jeremy Serwer

For about 40 years after my first bar mitzvah, I never knew I wanted one I could remember. I did manage to perform my original one within a few weeks after my father passed away. So, I knew I had a bar mitzvah; I just wasn't aware — I had no memory of it.

Then, around 1990, Nancy and I attended the only bar mitzvah we ever witnessed at TBS. I remember a huge wave of emotion overtaking me: simply, I was just speechless — a rarity in my case.

So, I re-did my bar mitzvah at TBS, solo, as an adult. I studied my Torah portion every day, and on Thanksgiving weekend a year later, Rabbi Sonsino had me assist Friday night's Shabbat

service — speech and all. The latter wasn't easy, given the history, but a huge void was at least partially filled.

The tradition of bar mitzvah celebrates acceptance into the community G-d promised our forefathers and gave to us. It was incomplete for me. It is no longer.





I grew up in a caring home during a most difficult time. The nation was still in the grips of the Great Depression, and my Mom and Dad, like others, lost their faith in the only religion they had ever known. As a child, I hung a Christmas stocking instead of lighting a menorah candle. In time, I grew ever more dissatisfied bearing my parents' decision. As an adult, I sought to reopen the doors to my family's ancient faith. I read, I studied, and in my fifties decided I was ready to take that holy step and be an adult bat mitzvah — a decision I have never regretted. It felt like barred doors had finally been flung open, and I walked into a space of warmth, understanding, and belonging. It is never too late to come home.



Completion: Our Temple Beth Shalom *Sefer Torah*

By Bernice Behar and Wendy Gutterson

Temple Beth Shalom has a proud history of milestone events dating back to 1959, when our founders dedicated our first synagogue home, just four years after founding our Temple. Through the years, we have marked transitions in professional and lay leadership, embraced new clergy as they've ascended to our bima, built model learning programs, renovated our sanctuary, and expanded our space to accommodate an ever-growing and thriving community. To these milestones, we now add one more — the dedication of a new *Sefer Torah* (Torah scroll), beautifully scribed by *Soferet* Ariela Houseman, in partnership with all of us.

The very idea to undertake this sacred project was rooted in two compelling forces. The first was the timeless obligation, the 613th mitzvah/commandment, which calls on each one of us to "write" a Torah.





Certainly, this is a lofty call, one that may not seem accessible to very many of us. We are told though, that each of us can fulfill the spirit of the mitzvah by supporting the writing of a Torah, whether it be by witnessing the process with a full heart, scribing a letter, or even lending financial support to the project.

The second driving force for this project was the desire to bring our community back together in the aftermath of the COVID health crisis. Having endured many months of separation from one another, we chose to create a new Torah as the ultimate community-affirming activity that we could imagine. Indeed, as we gradually emerged in fits and starts from the restrictions of COVID, it has been so uplifting to come together to see this sacred project to its completion.

We certainly could have simply hired a skilled *sofer/et* (male/female scribe) to scribe a new *Sefer Torah* for us and then stepped back to admire the finished product. Instead, we embraced the opportunity to bring all members of the Temple Beth Shalom family along for the journey. In the spirit of Torah itself whereby G-d instructs the Israelites to *Take from among you gifts to הוה* (Adonai); everyone whose heart is so moved shall bring them—gifts for יהוה," we envisioned everyone having the opportunity to bring their hearts and their skills to the crafting of our new Torah.

Beginning with our Simchat Beresheet kick-off in October 2021, Soferet Ariela devoted herself to scribing each letter, each verse, and all 245 columns of our new Sefer Torah. Along the way, she visited Temple Beth Shalom four times. During those visits, more than 500 people attended scribing sessions in which they witnessed our new Sefer Torah come to life, some even choosing to take quill to parchment themselves, scribing a letter with our Soferet's skilled guidance. Ariela led several programs for our adult communities and even worked with a group of members skilled in needle arts, giving them the rare opportunity to help sew together some of the completed pages of parchment.



Ariela also visited our learning programs and

brought our children close to the fascinating world of how a Torah is made. Many of those same children will be called to read from this new Torah at their b. mitzvah beginning this fall. This new *Sefer Torah* has come into being as a true work of love by and from the members of Temple Beth Shalom. May it be a blessing to our community for generations to come.

Bernice and Wendy, together with staff liaison Rachel Happel, are co-chairs of the Sefer Torah project.

Rabbi Jay... so far

see page 9 for more

Scroll - September 2003

Rabbi's Message



The great rabbinic sage who wrote that "all beginnings are difficult" clearly never served as Rabbi at Temple

Beth Shalom. From the moment Emily, Liana, and I arrived here in Needham we have experienced such a warm welcome from our new congregation. And for that, we would like to say, "Thank you." We are truly excited to be here and to be able to share in the life of such a special commu-

I must admit that September has always been one of my favorite months. Growing up in New England, I remember well the extraordinary colorful display that autumn brings to this part of the country. Each year, the foliage of fall turns our landscape into a pallet of brilliant reds, oranges, and yellows. And, in many ways, it seems to somehow serve as nature's way of trying to tell us something: that another year is anxiously awaiting us - and that tomorrow brings with it wonderful possibilities and potential.

Indeed, it would be hard to imagine a more perfect time for our High Holy Days. During Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we are unquestionably inspired to celebrate the year that is yet-tobe. But in addition to that, we are also offered the opportunity to experience a genuine sense of personal renewal as we are asked consider the very direction of our

For Emily, Liana, and me, the High Holy Days have always held special meaning. But this year, especially, our new relationship with the Beth Shalom community and the closeness that we look forward to sharing with all of you, makes these Holy Days all the more so. Please feel free to let me know if ever you have a question, a thought, or a concern. And may the new year bring to us all, many days that are filled with sweetness, joy, and blessing.

TEMPLE BETH SHALOM





Yahrzeits

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Lisa Kessel Freedman on the passing of her cousin, Andrew Kessel

Joyce Sterling, Nick Sterling on the passing of their husband and father, Eliot Sterling

Mara Kenger, Madeleine, Margot, and Eloise Marcus and Josie Semel, Noah, Helene, and Ella Semel on the passing of their husband, father, brother-in-law and uncle, Adam Kenger

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Emily & Rabbi Jay's kindness & support

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Rabbi Jay

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Rabbi Jay's fabulous 20 years Rabbi Jay & Emily's 20th anniversary at TBS

Sam Singer becoming a Bar Mitzvah Sam Singer becoming a Bar Mitzvah Ozi Tasgal becoming a Bar Mitzvah Ozi Tasgal becoming a Bar Mitzvah

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18 Years with Rabbi Todd... so far - see page 21 for more

Rabbi Jay summarizes so much of what we love about Rabbi Todd:

o say that our congregation has been joyfully transformed by Rabbi Todd's leadership, extraordinary creativity, genuine warmth, and seemingly boundless spirit would not be an over exaggeration, even on a holiday that is known for its over-exaggeratedness. And while Purim is a holiday devoted to fabled fantasy, the truth is that we are overjoyed to celebrate Rabbi Todd's depth of heart, his thoughtfulness of mind, and his ever outstretched hands to help bring us blessing during the most happy of times, during the most challenging of times, and every single day in between. In more than a word, to be with Rabbi Todd is to just feel uplifted, supported, and good.

A blessing for all of you as your family inspires such happiness, strength, and wisdom. May you as well continue to be sustained in joy and by thoughtfulness. As you reach out so graciously in support and in mentorship of others, may you always feel embraced by the TBS community and by beloved colleagues who care so deeply for all of you. May it be the music of Phish, the energy of the Force and the love of family and friendship that continue to fill your hearts and your lives and that your knowledge of the truly profound difference that you have made and continue to make in all of our lives inspire you as you journey forward together as a family in good health with much happiness and peace." R'Jay

We are so lucky to have Rabbi Todd's force and grace be with us. Here's to the next eighteen years!



Led by Rabbi Todd Markley with Scholar-in-Residence Dr. David Mendelsohn

March 9-20, 2025

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- Bring to light the glory of Moroccan Jewry from past to present
- Savor the flavors of Morocco with a taste of local delicacies at the **bustling marketplaces**
- Celebrate Kabbalat Shabbat with members of the Marrakech Jewish community
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ABOUT DR. MENDELSOHN:
We are delighted that we have been able to secure Dr. David Mendelsohn to join us on our trip to Morocco - in addition to our local guide - to bring added depth to our learning as we travel the country together. In addition to having led trips to Morocco in the past for Kivunim, Professor Mendelsohn's areas of expertise include Islamic Studies, History and Culture of Arabs with Israeli Citizenship, Bedouin Law and the relationship between language and culture in Arabic and Hebrew. Mendelsohn also lectures on the history and relationships between Middle East countries and militant organizations. David holds advanced degrees in diverse fields: a Ph.D. Classics / Linguistics, and M.A. in Archaeology / Linguistics and an Honours B.A. in Classical Studies. David is the recipient of one of Canada's highest academic honors, The Trudeau Prize. He lives in Jerusalem with his wife Ronny and 3 children.



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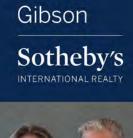
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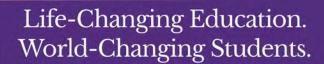


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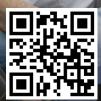




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