January & February 2016

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Nancy Frischbach & Martin Wolman: in memory of Jerome Frischbach
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Laura Hesslein: in memory of Nathan Magida
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Debra Landrey: in memory of Marvin W. Radom Maxine Leichtman: in honor of Alexander Infeld’s bar mitzvah
Maxine Leichtman: in memory of Samuel Tilles
Carole LeWitt & Bruce Joseph: in memory of Harriet Peffer
Carole LeWitt & Bruce Joseph: in memory of Rabbi Harold White
Carole LeWitt & Bruce Joseph: in memory of Robert Potkin, Bernard Horning, Judy Fein
Jo-An Maynard: in honor of High Holiday services
Leonard & Ellen Nodelman: in memory of Constance Huttart
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Joseph Peer: in memory of Michael Peer
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Elliott & Eileen Pollack: in memory of Sergeant
Samuel Tilles
Samuel & Naomi Rogers: in memory of Rita Rogers
Matthew & Hodras Rubin: in memory of Doreen Rubin
Matthew & Hodras Rubin: in memory of Michael Levy
Charles Savitt: in memory of Martin Wolman
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Adela Saykin: in memory of Martin Saykin
Elliot & Nancy Schwam: in memory of Sam Tilles
Peter Schwobsky: in memory of Irving Schwobsky
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Philip & Susan Fine: in memory of Susan Fine and Rochelle Dauenheimer’s Ark opening
Myra Fishman: in memory of Harvey Fishman
Marc & Erica Golber: in appreciation of Rabbi Goldenberg
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Among many surprising experiences in my almost 13 years in the rabbinate, two incidents make me chuckle and really bring a deeper lesson about Judaism that I want to share with you.

In the first story, I was invited to the home of some congregants for Rosh Hashanah dinner. As soon as I walked in the door, my hosts whisked me to the back of the property, where, sitting in the driveway, was a gleaming, new, huge SUV. They were incredibly excited to ask me – “Rabbi, will you please bless our new car?”

In the second story, a recently married couple came to a congregational celebration of Chanukah. The husband was deeply proud that he had recently given his wife a complete set of Spode Judaica as a gift, including a menorah, a seder plate, Shabbat candlesticks, and many more items. He was so excited that he brought every single piece in this gorgeous set to the synagogue and began to carefully unwrap each one. When I remarked on how beautiful these things were, he said, “Rabbi, I brought them here so you could bless them.”

In both of these stories, the intentions were absolutely heartfelt and good. And both times, I had to delicately refuse to bless these things. With the SUV, I swallowed my personal opinions about the environment and gas-guzzling and offered a prayer that they should drive the car in good health and safety. And in the second instance, I reminded the couple that they will bless and sanctify the moment — the holiday they are celebrating — when they use each piece of Judaica.

In Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel’s book, The Sabbath, he teaches how for Jews, time is more important than space. We don’t sanctify objects or places; we sanctify moments. These moments can be as mundane as eating a meal and as momentous as a wedding. Of course, we do think of certain places as holy, but not because the place itself has some inherently sacred quality. A place is holy because of what happened there or what continues to happen there.

As I write this column, we are smack in the middle of our transition, and as I make my plans for what is next for my rabbinate and for my family, and as the Search Committee brings in rabbinic candidates to lead CBSRZ into its next century. Transitions are very busy times. There are lots of things to take care of.

My hope and prayer is that as we move into our final six months together we can have the awareness that this transition is also a holy time. It is a time full of emotion — sadness, loss, anticipation, excitement, anxiety, gratitude. My intention is to try and live each moment as fully as I can — to be fully present for each of the events and celebrations and life-cycle moments and Shabbat services and classes and conversations that remain for us together. I hope that you will join me in sanctifying these last precious moments that we have. Come to Scrollers if you haven’t in a while, or to Shabbat services, or try one of my classes. If you’re moved to do so, give me a call, and we can make plans to meet for coffee or lunch. Or call ahead to make sure I’m available, and come by my office for a chat. We have made CBSRZ a holy place together, for eight and a half years. Let’s make each day that we have left an opportunity for blessing.
This year we have heard university campuses across the country echoing with the voices of protestors calling for a stronger response to racism in the university community. Meanwhile, tensions on campus have sparked an important conversation about the role of free speech, freedom of expression and political correctness.

The Black Lives Matter movement has generated a groundswell of action, including political pressure and vocal demands for campus administrations to change how they do business. We’ve watched protests, a hunger strike and a threatened boycott by the football team at the University of Missouri ultimately lead the president of that school to resign. More recently, Yale faculty member Erika Christakis resigned after igniting protests when she said that students should be free to push boundaries with Halloween costumes, even to the point of offense. And at our neighboring campus, Wesleyan University, student leaders voted to cut funding to a campus newspaper after it published an Op-Ed criticizing the Black Lives Matters movement.

Are we watching the next stage of the Civil Rights movement unfolding on our college campuses? Have we arrived at a place as Americans where we can finally talk about race and racism in a way that may lead to a deep transformation of our culture? What is the role of open dialogue and free speech, especially in an academic environment?

As we mark the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Social Action Committee has invited Wesleyan University President, and our own congregant, Dr. Michael Roth, to address these questions. Roth will speak during our annual Erev Shabbat service honoring Dr. King. This service will also include Civil Rights songs led by the CBSRZ choir, under the direction of Meg Gister.

JEWISH BELIEFS AND RITUALS ABOUT DEATH:
A CHANCE TO ASK YOUR QUESTIONS
WEDNESDAYS FEBRUARY 24 AND MARCH 9 FROM 7-9PM

Death is a subject we tend to have a lot of questions about, but it’s hard to know when or to whom to ask those questions. Over two sessions in February and March, Rabbi Goldenberg, Caring Coordinator Iris Freeman and Chesed chair Linda Sherman will create a space and a time for CBSRZ members to explore Jewish beliefs and rituals connected to death.

Session #1 on February 24 will focus on beliefs, addressing the question of “What do Jews believe happens after you die?” We will study Jewish traditions about what happens to the body and the soul, Jewish concepts of heaven and hell, with plenty of time for your questions.

Session #2 on March 9 will focus on the Jewish rituals that shepherd us from death to burial, to shiva. We’ll look at the role of the family, the rabbi and the community after a death and talk about the values and big Jewish ideas reflected in these rituals. Again, there will be plenty of time for your questions.
My favorite tale of how to lead (NOT!) is about British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and her famously cowed cabinet. They had sat down for a working dinner one night in London when a waiter came along to take Mrs. Thatcher’s order. “I’ll have the beef and potatoes,” she instructed. “And the vegetables?” inquired the waiter. “Oh,” the prime minister responded, waving a hand at her colleagues, “they’ll have the same.”

As politically incorrect as that caricature may seem, it does illustrate exactly the opposite of how things work at CBSRZ. In fact, I’ve come to realize more than ever that we succeed by making sure the right people are in the right spots, and then watching collaborative magic unfold. We turn out to be a place where we unleash enthusiasms to remarkable effect, whether we face tasks before us at home or in the outside world. Let me show you what I mean.

Perhaps the biggest immediate mission under our roof is, of course, the rabbi search. You can read elsewhere in this issue about how it is moving forward; I am confident that we will identify a worthy successor to Rabbi Goldenberg by late winter, with a congregational vote on the finalist soon after, in good time for that person to take the pulpit July 1. We will also soon discuss plans for ways we will say goodbye to Rachel. Here, though, I want to throw a spotlight, with admiration and wonderment, on the eleven members of the search committee, who may not fully have realized at the outset just how consuming this project would turn out to be. Led by Rita Christopher as chair, Ali Rosenblum as vice chair and Linda Sherman as secretary, this group began meeting each Monday evening starting in July. By December, they were gathering up to three times each week, and sometimes more than once a day, not including the hours involved in the considerable homework of reading about and vetting candidates, all on behalf of the rest of us. Members of the committee (others are Stuart Baker, Amy Conley, David Fogel, Tracy Kleinberg, Sean Konecky, Ed Pinn, Adina Ripin and Stephen Rozenberg) are all strong individuals, with different perspectives, but they have worked together as a team. I suspect none will be quite the same after this is over; for years to come they will draw inspiration from having lent their souls and judgment to a unique and sacred responsibility. As a community, we are truly in good and caring hands.

We also have found leaders at CBSRZ to address broader challenges. First, a word of context. If you haven’t seen it, watch a riveting panel on the future of Israel and Judaism at the November 2015 biennial conference of the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ). The YouTube link is at http://youtu.be/duOVyGis_zs. I’m proud to say, last month the URJ named former CBSRZ president Bruce Josephy a Team Leader. It also made a great choice in selecting this stirring panel, moderated by New York Times correspondent Jodi Kantor, and featuring author Ari Shavit, Israeli legislator Stav Shaffir, and former URJ president Rabbi Eric Yoffie. “What is defending the Jewish future,” declared Shavit, in a way “just as important as the Israeli Air Force,” is the sacred work of tikkun olam undertaken by Reform congregations across the United States. The secret to “Zionist optimism”, he continued, is a “mega Jewish project” to undertake social justice in Israel, “in the third world, in Baltimore, and in Ferguson.” I might add Middletown. Our Social Action Committee, under Andy Schatz’s leadership, has assembled a plan for CBSRZ to work with secular and faith institutions to help resettle a refugee family in Middletown, even as other states have sought to keep such desperate families out. Most of us, of course, are or came from refugees to

(Continued on page 6)
The “Mega Jewish Project” (Continued from page 5)

America. Izzi Greenberg has stepped in to coordinate our effort, which was endorsed unanimously by the board. And we have seen other congregants offer their time and resources. There are further causes that deserve our attention, too. But this powerful response to crisis speaks to the way our community can move.

If you are outraged at an injustice, I invite you to frame ideas and recruit support among us. We are not good at advancing by the style of top-down authority depicted in the Thatcher story. Instead, we depend on collaboration and pitching in. This is, as Ari Shavit might say, where the Jewish future is made.

Let me wind up with another favorite tale of what we don’t do here. This one comes from the venerable British television series ‘Yes Minister.’ The newly appointed cabinet secretary is confronting with his top civil servant about the mysteries of how things happen in the department he now leads.

“Why do we label certain items ‘Under Consideration’ while others we call ‘Under ACTIVE Consideration? What’s the difference?” he asks. “Why, that’s easy, Minister,” replies the civil servant smoothly. “If we label a matter ‘Under Consideration,’ it means we’ve lost the file. If we label it ‘Under ACTIVE Consideration’, it means we’ve lost the file—but we’re looking for it.” Fortunately, that’s not the way we file at CBSRZ.

Please bring your enthusiasm and leadership into the community, and we will do our best to respond with action.

M U S S A R

Mussar, also described as “spiritual ethics,” has been practiced for centuries by people seeking to cultivate and strengthen the qualities of their inner lives. Mussar has been undergoing a revival in the Jewish world, and we are fortunate to be able to offer this curriculum created by The Mussar Institute, leaders in the field. This program is endorsed by the Union for Reform Judaism and is suitable for all, regardless of level of Jewish knowledge. There are no prerequisites, nor is Hebrew required. Come join in small group study, led by Cantor Belinda, a trained facilitator, as we explore together, in a safe and caring environment, what the Jewish tradition has to teach us about the traits of humility, gratitude, equanimity, patience, order and honor, among others — and discover how these qualities work in your own life. The group will meet for ten sessions, starting Thursday, January 7, 2016 and will then meet every other week ending on May 5, 2016. The sessions will run from 7pm – 8:30pm. You will receive a copy of the course textbook Everyday Holiness by Alan Morinis, and in group meetings and personal study and practice, we will explore these soul traits together.

Mussar offers a Jewish pathway and a set of teachings that will help you find your way toward becoming your best self, and our community to reach its higher potential.

Cantor Belinda, who will be leading the sessions has this to say about her involvement with Mussar:

Eleven years ago, I had the great fortune to be introduced to Mussar directly from Alan Morinis, founder of the Mussar Institute, by attending a class offered at a CAJE educational conference. I have been hooked on Mussar ever since. I follow a personal Mussar practice, have participated in the Mussar Institute’s online class “Everyday Holiness,” and I have been incredibly fortunate to have been trained by the Mussar Institute’s program coordinator, Judith Zaruches, as a facilitator in order to bring Mussar to our own community. Knowing how Mussar has shaped my soul journey, I am extremely excited to invite everyone to embark on their own personal soul path.

Through the sponsorship of our Adult Ed Committee, our community will soon begin a program of study and practice in the way of the Jewish spiritual tradition of Mussar. This series explores a traditional Jewish spiritual discipline that offers sound guidance to help you cultivate the qualities of your soul. Rabbi Elya Lopian, a contemporary master, defines Mussar as “Making the heart feel what the intellect understands.” As Alan explains “Mussar’s teachings and practices help us work a radical inner transformation by showing us how to close the gap between the high ideals we hold in mind and the living truth of how we act in life.”

If you are interested, please call the office before January 7 to see if there are still spaces available.

The fee for this course $90 (a cost that is paid to the Mussar Institute for their materials). If you already have the book, Everyday Holiness by Alan Morinis, the fee will be $75. We do not want any obstacles to prevent participation, please contact Cantor Belinda or Deb Rutty (program Administrator) if financial support is needed. If you are on the fence, you can attend the opening orientation session with a full refund if you choose not to continue.
According to internationally recognized artist Harry Folsom: “There are many paintings and many artists but rarely do paintings arise with such strength, purpose and overwhelming originality. Juniper Foster has evolved to a place in the artistic community where she and her work can no longer be ignored.” “Emerging Worlds,” a collection of paintings by Ms. Foster, will be featured February through April in CBSRZ’s Main Street Gallery.

Juniper received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Gaucher College in 1996 and went on to take additional courses at Maryland Institute College of Art. She worked with mixed media materials in Los Angeles producing a body of work exploring the female identity and at 27 began working in oil in New York City.

Her work has been exhibited at the Noyse School of Rhythm and City Island galleries. In 2010, Juniper became affiliated with Harry Folsom, and under his guidance developed abstract works that seek to transform the viewer into a participant of the art itself. In 2014 she began showing her work in Manhattan. This spring one of Juniper’s pieces will be used by the Hali Foundation as the logo and identifying aspect of their work and mission statement. Titled The March, the painting is aligned with this organization’s groundbreaking work teaching autistic children to sing.

“I find it very telling that my first solo show should be in this amazing temple designed by the great Sol LeWitt. I have never been an observant Jew. Ironically, as I paint, my ethnicity exposes itself to me. Tiny villages, vaudeville faces, humble goats and floating fairy tales crowd my canvases, scaring and delighting me through endless scenarios.”

Juniper strives to take the viewer on a journey, “...but I want you to see my bruises and scrapes along the way...[my] process is dangerous. It’s impossible to plan a composition and maintain a raw, unencumbered aliveness that I strive for. The finished piece wants to be like an open book with all the pages layered over itself — in semi-transparency. Vibrant, yet fragmented...complete, yet mysterious...dreamlike. It breaks my heart sometimes — that the first layers of a painting are mostly hidden at the end, but I leave you a trail of clues so you can feel, perhaps, some of what I felt as I painted.”

Of her “Emerging Worlds” body of work Foster explains, “What I’m interested in as a painter is raw emotion and how that relates to color, and the situation that is created when the colors and the raw emotions meet. And, I’m interested in how much life I can create within this shape, within this framework. Color and chaos.”

This exhibit, which begins in early February, is free and open to the public Monday through Friday, 10AM to 3PM. Ms. Foster will donate a generous percentage of all work sold to CBSRZ.
ARTIST: JEREMY HORSEMAN

by Linda Pinn

During erev shabbat services on October 16 the synagogue received a beautiful gift: Jeremy Horseman’s painting, *Rivka and the Well*. Jeremy provides us with a description of his artistic journey and composition of this work:

“Although I am a conceptual painter, my very first developments as an artist were founded in the study of classical painting techniques and historic art. *Rivka and the Well* was made during this time, fourteen years ago. It was started in October, 2001, and finished seven months later in May, 2002. Since its creation, it has been on display in gallery settings and temporary installations in Baltimore, New York City and Connecticut. For me, *Rivka and the Well* represents the beginning of many characteristics that remain consistent in my current work. It was the first larger scale painting that I had ever worked on. It initiated my interests in abstract and color symbolism as well as the desire to embrace narrative and even social questioning and commentary. Since the creation of *Rivka* I have maintained an integrity for figurative art and the human body as I still continue to draw allusions from Yiddish folklore, Jewish legend and mysticism and the Torah.

In the Torah portion Chayeisarah, Abraham’s servant Eliezer is assigned to seek out and serve as the diplomat to Isaac’s future wife. Upon arriving at the well, Eliezer’s is to ask, “Please, tip over your pitcher so that I may drink...” And the one who answers, “Drink, and I will even water your camels,” is to be the chosen bride for Isaac. The pictorial tradition of Rivka is commonly appreciated as a romance. But, like any other romance found in Biblical literature, the metaphor is drawn between human and G-d. Hashem can work through the patriarchs and matriarchs or any of us alive today, showing acts of chesed (loving kindness), tiferet (beauty), endless generosity and selflessness, abounding grace, peace and fulfillment.

When creating this painting, my initial intention was a little bit theatrical in the sense that the subject, Rivka, is looking back at the viewer, as if the viewer were playing the role of Abraham’s servant, Eliezer. More specifically, I aimed to focus on the elemental components of this well-known narrative...like water, which is metonymic for life and wisdom in Kabbalistic thought, and also, symbolic ingredients such as the well and the pitcher, or rather, a larger vessel bringing water to a smaller vessel. Whether looking for inspiration or identity, or looking for hope and comfort in the face of derision, we the vessel — our heritage and Hashem, the G-d of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, and of Sara, Rivka, Leah and Rachel. If you look closely you’ll see that the well water is flowing from a lion’s mouth. As the lion is a symbol of the tribe of Judah, Rivka, a quintessential matriarch of Judaism, symbolically draws water not only from G-d, but also from the strength of her people. Thus, in the moment of her giving water to Eliezer and his camels, Rivka gives future strength, hope and wisdom to all of the generations to follow.

It is a great honor for me to gift this painting to this congregation, as I feel that Beth Shalom Rodfe Zedek has given much to me. With kindness and warmth I was introduced into this congregation and was provided with a sanctuary and place to observe the holidays during my four years of study at the Lyme Academy. There are many paths I could have chosen for this painting to take, but I would much rather find a home with the members of CBZRZ, a home that is both proactive in the surrounding art community and a home that embraces Jewish life, traditions and spirituality.”

Jeremy Horseman graduated from the Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts in 2013 and received his Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree along with several awards and scholarships including the Diana Atwood Johnson Leadership Award and the Stephen Wardlaw Prize. He is the first undergraduate student for whom the Lyme Academy mounted a one-man show and the first Academy student to be accepted into the Lorenzo de’Medici Biennale Program in Venice, Italy. Horseman’s work has been recently included in both the Sigmund Balka and LeWitt collections. He is presently an MFA candidate working under a Creative Opportunity Grant at Syracuse University where he both teaches and practices his art.
Jeremy Horseman, *Rivka and the Well*
PICTURE GALLERY

A tense game of dreidel blackjack. Hershey kisses to the winner.

Ali Rosenblum and daughter Rebecca light their hanukkiah during the celebratory service.

Rabbi Goldenberg dressed in props for her Hanukkah “pitchfork” story.
Latkes, kugel and hungry congregants

Martha Stone, founder of the Center for Children’s Advocacy, accepts the first CBSRZ Pursuers of Justice award
Steve Nadler gives the back story to his collection of photos in his exhibit “A Moment in Time.”

Israeli Emissaries visited CBSRZ on our Third Thursday lunch in October.

Beth Gottlieb and Paula Feder in the sculpture gallery at the Slater Memorial Museum of Norwich. The trip was led by our Caring Coordinator, Iris Freeman.
CBSRZ Heritage Bus Tour—October 11

By Sandy Herzog

“Y ou can’t put that ice cooler on the seats. It will leak all over the place.” That’s how our bus trip started and I thought, oh, no, just our luck to have a mean-spirited bus driver! But Jesse had second thoughts, covered the seats with plastic and turned out to be the best driver, ever, skillfully navigating the tricky country curves. His guide was Linda Rigono, who has an uncanny sense of direction.

Thus began our bus tour on a beautiful October Sunday morning with the foliage in full splendor!

The Adult Education Committee had spent hours of preparation for this event, which would be part of the 100th year celebration. We would tour the sites of the early ‘shuls,’ farms and resorts of Moodus, Chester and Deep River.

The trip really went beyond our expectations!

We left from CBSRZ about 9:30 a.m. and began by driving to Moodus. Mary Donohue, with more than 30 years experience as a historic preservationist and architectural historian and who is currently the assistant publisher of Connecticut Explored, was our tour leader. We passed by the first ‘shul’, a charming old building, and we marveled at how far we’ve come, especially in terms of space. We saw the community center where social activities were held, across from the old ‘shul’ on North Moodus Rd.

We saw where vibrant downtown Moodus had once been before it was lost forever due to redevelopment.

We stopped at My Father’s House, today a Catholic retreat on the site of Orchard Mansion, once a favorite Jewish resort for many people, especially from NYC. This property still retains a lot of the original facility — woodwork, cabins, two kitchens, dining room with a plaque dedicated to the original owners —the Kabatznicks. While we were there, Irv Shiffman shared his memories of his time spent as a waiter at Orchard Mansion.

We went on to the Grandview campground site of the Grandview Hotel. Not much remains of the Grandview.

Our guide mentioned how they had

Mary Donohue addresses group at former Orchard Mansion in Moodus

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tried to preserve the hotel, but vandals had wrecked it beyond redemption. They did keep the entrance to the hotel and made it into a gazebo where weddings and other special events are held. The view on this beautiful day was spectacular, and one could visualize what the visitors saw sitting around the pool way up on the hill.

We then drove by the site of the former Joymax Farm, once the largest family-run chicken farm in the area with 85 acres and 55,000 chickens in its heyday. The farm was started by Max and Isidore Simon (with the help of a mortgage from the Jewish Agricultural & Industrial Aid Society) and later run by Max and Joyce Simon. Son, Ken, remembered hearing the happy sounds coming from Banner Lodge, just up the road from his home.

We continued on to Rodfe Zedek Cemetery, purchased in 1918. The bus was not allowed to pull into the cemetery. We are hoping to schedule a cemetery tour when we can visit both Rodfe Zedek and Fountain Hill Cemeteries as there is so much history associated with these sites.

Klar Crest Resort was next on the tour. We drove past this property, now a Chassidic summer camp for girls called Camp Chomeish. In its heyday, Klar Crest was run by David Klar and his late wife Miriam, who graciously hosted picnics and other events for our congregants.

The last stop in Moodus was at the site of the second Congregation Rodfe Zedek, now Christ Community Church on Orchard Road.

It was a memorable experience as we walked into a most welcoming crowd of CCC congregants which included their gregarious pastor, Victoria Triano!! Such smiles and warmth!! They had a lovely spread of desserts awaiting us. So unexpected and so kind!

One of the highlights was our luncheon at the East Haddam Historical Society. Marian Halpin from the Society had been so helpful in many ways and it was clear that this would be the perfect place to rest and eat. We were especially grateful to Jim Talbott who transported the luncheon food to the Society for us.

A special treat was the presentation by Ken Simon, Emmy-winning producer of documentaries, who demonstrated what it was like to grow up on his family’s chicken farm — JoyMax Farms in Moodus. The photos and old documents of his family and farm were so very interesting.

After the lunch, we traveled to Chester. We drove by the site of the Humpty Dumpty Farm, a chicken farm run by Lillian and Joe Friend, and continued on to the Jacobson House, the first site for the Deep River/Chester group which was to become first, the Jewish Community Center and then Congregation Beth Shalom.

We went on to Deep River driving past the Deep River Library (where many meetings were held), and the Deep River Elementary School, where classrooms were leased for the Beth Shalom Religious School for a short time.

We stopped briefly outside the Fountain Hill Cemetery but couldn’t go in because of the bus policy forbidding driving into cemeteries.

The last brief stop was our earlier synagogue in Deep River. This building had originally been the Swedish Mission Church, then a YMCA. The building was bought by the Jewish Community Center, which became Congregation Beth Shalom and then Congregation Beth Shalom Rodfe Zedek. In October of 2001, the congregation joined in a ‘group hug’ around the building, then led by the CBSRZ Klezmer band, A Klez Act, marched with the Torahs to its new home in Chester.

All in all we had a fabulous day! It was made special by the recollections of Irv Shiffman, Marty Pear and Jackie Michael, and it was a learning experience for the rest of us who could envision what the early shuls, resorts and farms meant to the ones who walked before us. Bravo to those of you who paved the way!
It seems unavoidable that thoughts of reality TV should surface as we go through this six-month process of elimination to arrive at the lone survivor, our choice for our new rabbi. While the need to protect the confidentiality of the candidates who have sent us resumés is paramount, I thought the congregation might find the inner workings of committee worth a quick look. Both Stu Baker and myself had served on the last committee, the one that brought us Rabbi Goldenberg, which was chaired by JoAnn Price. I think there was some expectation that our prior experience could be of benefit to the current committee’s work. And I dare say that has been the case with Stu who actually remembers some of the discussions. As I’m still trying to remember the name of the movie I saw last week, I may have less to contribute in this respect.

Our chairperson Rita Christopher has been doing a wonderful job. The search has been conducted according to the guidelines set down by CCAR (Central Conference of American Rabbis). I think we were all surprised at the amount of preparatory material they provided us. Rita organized this, has set agendas for each meeting, kindly hosted a dinner for the committee where we had the opportunity to meet with a representative of URJ, Rabbi Offal, and has ably performed her duties as mother hen, encouraging, soothing ruffled feathers, and generally keeping our disparate group on message. She has provided us with a prayer that we recite at the beginning of each meeting reminding us of the responsibility that we have undertaken and that we should be devoting our efforts toward the needs of the community. In one area she has shown herself to be a little lacking. It has taken us a few attempts to master the avant-garde technology of skype. Fortunately, Adina Ripin, our resident technological wizard, has had Rita’s back, and we are now glitch free.

Personally I have been delighted to get to know the other members of committee and impressed by their intelligence and humor. There is real diversity not only of opinion regarding the merits of particular candidates, but also of the experience each of us brings to the table. We are choir members, Holy Scrollers, parents of religious school children, committee chairs and many other things of course. The different avenues by which we come to our community provide multiple perspectives that we hope will result in the choice of well-rounded candidate. As one of the questions we ask alludes to, our rabbi needs to feel comfortable wearing many different hats.

I have also felt privileged to engage in conversations with the rabbis who have applied for this position. We have now conducted eight skype interviews and have hosted two candidates for visits to the synagogue. Two more will have visited us by the time this issue is published. We have met a lot of great people. Even those candidates who clearly would not be right for our congregation have been well worth talking to. We are on track to present our final recommendations to the Board and to the congregation in late January or early February.

The members of the committee are Rita Christopher, Adina Ripin, Stu Baker, Amy Conley, Tracy Kleinberg, David Fogel, Linda Sherman, Ali Rosenblum, Stephen Rozenberg, Ed Pinn, Stephen Davis and myself. Anyone of us would be delighted to answer questions or provide more information about the work of the committee, respecting of course the confidentiality of our applicants.
HUMAN RIGHTS SHABBAT—RACE AND JUSTICE

The U.S. has only 5% of the world's population but 25% of the world's prisoners, of which 20% are serving time for drug offenses (of which 80% are for possession only). And 57% of drug prisoners in state prisons and 77% in federal prisons are African-American or Latino, despite accounting for only 30% of the population and the now-recognized fact that drug use is similar in all racial populations.

Why these disparities exist, and what might be done about them, were the focus of a panel discussion organized by the Social Action Committee at CBSRZ on December 5 for Human Rights Shabbat.

In addition to Rabbi Goldenberg (who acted as moderator as well as panelist), the panel consisted of three experts on different aspects of prison life and reform: George Chochos who served time for armed robbery in New York's toughest prisons but is now a minister in churches in Albany and New Haven; Tamara Lanier, chief probation officer from Groton and the Criminal Justice Chair of the NAACP in Connecticut; and David McGuire, the Legislative and Policy Director for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut.

A fifth important contributor was not on the stage: Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow – Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, which documents how most of a generation of black men has been marginalized.

Rabbi Goldenberg focused on over-incarceration and Professor Alexander's book in her powerful Yom Kippur sermon.

The Rabbi began by discussing teachings from the Torah and Talmud that suggest general criticism of prisons within a community and stress the importance of hearing the cries of those imprisoned spiritually or physically.

George Chochos tied the religious approach to the personal struggle with a riveting account of his personal and professional history. But mostly he inspired with his story of being able to save himself through the intervention of others, first by assisting with prison chaplains and ultimately through work by which he obtained two bachelors' degrees and a master's degree while still in prison. He is now about to receive his PhD from the Yale Divinity School.

Tamara Lanier combined a personal and professional perspective on civil rights and prison issues. From a long
line of civil rights and NAACP activists, from Alabama to Connecticut, she shared some of her personal stories of the family’s social justice activism as well as her own work as a social justice advocate carrying on her family tradition. As a probation officer in Willimantic and later chief probation officer in Groton, Tammy has seen the devastating effect of illegal drugs and prison sentences and focused on the need for intervention and support. She told of her difficulties getting supervisors to support alternatives to incarceration (“in the 1990s, everything was about putting folks in jail”).

David McGuire focused not only on the legislation that has passed but what further legislative and administrative actions might be taken in Connecticut. He commented that it is “important that we realize the privilege we have and use that privilege for good.” He recommended volunteering at a prison and noted that although Connecticut has closed some prisons and is closing others, there is a prison within a half hour of any place in the state.

The questions — from Rabbi Goldenberg, Andy Schatz (chair of social action at CBSRZ and president of the ACLU of Connecticut, who was unable to attend), and the audience — focused discussion on police activity and different racial treatment and possible changes that might address these issues.

Lanier pointed out that Connecticut has transition programs, but many prisoners don’t have access due to lack of availability. Chochos added that in the New York prisons, teachers are often not available for courses even though the state recognizes that recidivism drops for those who have taken courses and that it costs $5,000 per year to educate and $60,000 to incarcerate.

Yet there were areas where the panelists appeared to disagree. Although all panelists would prefer that society embrace the intervention and treatment model, Lanier noted that until that happens, jail is sometimes the best practical intervention, to which Chochos’ life — and, he says, the fact that he is still alive — might attest. Lanier recounted situations in which drug users died of overdose following earlier violations for which there was no arrest.

The panelists agreed on two areas for action — bail and school safety zones in drug laws — in which changes might alleviate some racial bias in enforcement. Bail is too often set at amounts that ensure that poor urban defendants (overwhelmingly minority) remain in prison pending trial, losing jobs as a result, even though those with strong ties to the community are unlikely to leave the area regardless of the bail amount. And the laws that provide for stiffer penalties for possession of drugs within 1500 feet of any school or day-care center essentially discriminate against minorities because there are few urban properties not within the 1500-foot zone.

Both of these measures will continue to face fierce opposition. The bail bond industry realizes that bail reform strikes at its purse. And reducing penalties for drugs near schools doesn’t sound like a position a politician would want to defend in a primary! Yet these panelists, and we hope CBSRZ, will try to change these laws this year.

The forum is available in its entirety on youtube.com or through the CBSRZ website.

Soup Kitchens Set Sites, Seek Staffing for 2016

CBSRZ Volunteers supervise and cook meals four times a year for each of the Deep River and Chester meal sites run by Shoreline Soup Kitchens and Pantries. SSKP’s values, like ours, hold that people in need should have access to food in ways that maintain their dignity. Access to food is a basic human right, and sustained cooperation of many people and organizations over time can lead to a hunger-free community

Here are some of our basic local “food facts”:

- In 2014, 16,949 meals were served at eight locations in the shoreline area
- Over 10% of Middlesex County residents suffer from hunger or “food insecurity”
- SSKP served 1,069 meals at UCC Chester in 2014
- SSKP served 2,378 meals at UCC Deep River in 2014

The people we serve remind us of “there but for the grace of God ...” - the 52 year-old college graduate desperate for a job, the man who became ill and lost his job, the cashier at the grocery store. In their own words: “I never expected to hit such tough times, thank God for the food pantry which kept me from going homeless.” “If the economy is better, why are more families coming weekly?” “Thank you for having the LOVE and foresight to create and continue to support people who are hungry.”

Patty Dowling, Exec. Director of the SSK&P thanked volunteers this year by saying: “You raise up the needs of those we serve, you make sure there is room for the conversations, hugs, laughter, helping and sharing, because you know that being in need is about more than food.”

In the coming year, we of the Social Action Committee would like to include more youth, families and new
volunteers. In February, Debbie Trautman’s religious school class will be running the Chester Soup Kitchen. We have also committed ourselves to serving an Easter Dinner (March 27), so that other faith communities can observe their holy day.

The following are a list of dates:

- Chester meal site on Sundays March 27 (Easter), June 12, September 4 and November 6. Contact Lynn Coville at lcoville@sbcglobal.net.
- Deep River meal site on Thursdays January 28, April 14 and June 30 (later dates to be determined). Contact Debby Trautmann at debbytrautmann@comcast.net.

Soup Kitchens—A Personal Perspective

Wikipedia defines a soup kitchen as a place where food is offered to the hungry for free or at a below market price. They are frequently located in lower-income neighborhoods and are often staffed by religious organizations. I didn’t know what to expect when I first started volunteering at local soup kitchens through the Temple. Visions of Oliver Twist and fingerless gloved hands reaching out for bowls of soup flashed through my head. What I didn’t expect was the sense of community and caring that surrounds these meals.

The Temple sponsors two shoreline soup kitchens every calendar quarter, and I have had the privilege to be involved in both the Chester and Deep River soup kitchens (held on Sundays and Thursdays, respectively, in the towns’ Congregational churches). The women and men who participate in these events do so with love; whether preparing meals, washing dishes, setting the tables or serving the food. The volunteers always try to make the atmosphere pleasant, at times bringing in music or perhaps playing an old piano. Those who prepare the meals go out of their way to make delicious and nutritional recipes and are happy to see every last bit of it disappear. Before every meal, we say the HaMotzi, and sometimes a Christian blessing is also said, as we celebrate our work together. We are encouraged to sit with our guests and chat about everyday things; the news, weather, music, whatever.

Recently I helped out at the Chester location at the Congregational church. I was asked to bring dessert, preferably something homemade. Inspired by previous meals other ladies had made I searched for a great recipe and decided on a pumpkin crumble I had seen on a cooking show. Lynn made a delicious chicken dish with a side of rice cooked with vegetables. Linda make carrots and peas and everyone commented on the size of the organic carrots and how tender they tasted. Rita made a wonderful salad with crunchy onions as a garnish. We brewed hot coffee for our guests and set the tables.

It was already dark as our guests started to arrive since the clocks had been changed off daylight savings time. Folks are very respectful that the meals are served at a specific time, so they poured some coffee and talked amongst themselves as they waited. Many of them knew each other and chatted about the goings on in their lives. As I walked around, I got a real sense that they were a family, chatting around the dinner table much as my own family would do. When it was time, we served up the food and were quite happy to hear, “Wow, smells delicious, did you make that?”

I sat down with the other ladies and looked around the room and the only word that came to mind was cozy. With the darkness outside and our guests clearly enjoying their food and the hum of conversation we all felt good that our efforts had made such a pleasant meal.

We packed up care packages for our guests to take home, some for loved ones who couldn’t travel and some for their own next meal. They all told us several times how wonderful our dishes were and one gentleman exclaimed, “Can you ladies come all the time!”

I try not to focus on the circumstances that brought these people here. Instead I take a moment to be thankful for my gifts and the blessings that this community has brought me.

—Teri Fogel

The Right to Die—the Right to Help?

It’s called the Right to Die, Aid in Dying, Death with Dignity, and Assisted Suicide – it’s sometimes called murder. To what extent does a terminally ill person facing pain and suffering likely to last for the rest of a short life have the right to receive assistance from doctors and others to end his/her life? Five states have protection for doctors assisting terminally ill patients to die in such circumstances, beginning with Oregon’s ballot measure first passed in 1994 and most recently with
a statute passed in California in 2015. In Connecticut, proposals have been introduced in the legislature in recent years and are expected to receive serious consideration, and possible passage, during the next few years.

On Sunday morning March 13, at 9:30 am - noon, the Social Action Committee will sponsor a forum to examine these issues, with the participation of Rabbi Goldenberg and a panel of activists, followed by roundtable discussions, which will be assisted by the Adult Education Committee. Issues of religious (particularly Jewish) perspective, medical thought and political positions will be on the table. This forum is part of an ongoing series of social action forums on embracing diversity of people and ideas.

Please mark your calendars—details to follow.

Sponsoring a Syrian Refugee Family—Update

As described in the last issue of WM, CBSRZ is joining in the effort to address the crisis in the Middle East that has displaced an incredible number of people – mothers, fathers, children, and families who are looking for nothing more than a home free of violence, persecution, and war. CBSRZ has now joined a coalition of non-profit and faith communities to support three refugee families who will come to the Middletown area.

Over the course of the past two months, this effort has gained momentum. Members of our religious community have attended organizational meetings, and six people from across the broader group – including Janie Pittendreigh from CBSRZ – went to a training session at IRIS (Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services) in New Haven to help the effort.

Thanks go out to all who have volunteered their time, resources, and energy to this endeavor. A realtor has offered housing expertise, a teacher has offered to help with language needs, a doctor has offered to provide healthcare, and parents have offered their children for play. For that and more, we are grateful.

Our efforts will be coordinated by Izzi Greenberg, who commented: “As a new congregant, it’s nice to know that I’m a member of a generous community. If you’ve offered to help and haven’t yet been called upon, don’t worry – you will be. This is a long-term effort with long-term needs.”

If you’ve not yet contacted us to contribute your time or resources to the effort and would like to do so, please contact Izzi at izzi@middlesexchildren.org.

Help Build A House

Each year, members of CBSRZ volunteer to help out constructing a house (or two) in Middletown.

The Middlesex Habitat for Humanity of CT is a volunteer-driven organization. People are welcome from all walks of life to join in building simple, decent, affordable houses.

Both construction and non-construction volunteer opportunities are available. You do not need to be an expert in construction to help out on a work site. There are many tasks that require only a willingness to learn and work with others.

Please join us by volunteering on Saturday morning in this most important Mitzvah of providing shelter for the homeless. Available dates will follow, but if you let us know now of your interest, we can try to select a date in the spring or fall that will work for you. Please contact debbytrautmann@comcast.net.

Writers Needed for Social Action Articles

The Social Action Committee is looking for volunteers to help write and edit articles for the Whole Megillah about the social action work of the synagogue. We need help getting the word out about all the work we do in the community (such as serving meals, building or furnishing homes), at the synagogue (including forums about topics of social justice and social action) and to impact change throughout the state (including work with regional or state action groups and legislative advocacy at the State Capitol in Hartford).

No experience is necessary, just enjoyment of writing.

If you want to get more involved in social action but have not been able to volunteer for our programs in the community, please help us get the word out — because social action works best and multiplies when others know about it.

Please contact andy@andrewschatz.com or 860-202-2690.
**CBSRZ NEWS**

**IT’S A BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR TREES!**

In Israel, Tu B’shevat, the Birthday for Trees, is celebrated at the time of year when, drawn from the roots by the warmth of the sun, sap starts running up the trees, just under the bark, carrying nutrients to the branches. In appreciation of the gifts given us by trees, we hold a seder during which we celebrate this return of life, the promise of a fruitful year. It is a treat to the senses. We celebrate with typical Israeli fruits and nuts, juices and wines, which are exquisite and varied in color, taste, aroma and texture. The fruits have strong skins we must peel or break, stones we do not swallow, and there are those that we can eat in their entirety. The tastes, the blessings, the narratives, the songs, the company we share at this seder table bring us joy in themselves as well as in anticipation of the coming spring.

The Tu B’shevat seder program will begin at 11:00 on Sunday, January 24 and last approximately 1-1/2 hour. All congregants are welcome and encouraged to participate. Kivvun families will be supplying many of the delicious fruits and nuts. If you would like to help with the slicing and plating of the fruits and nuts and getting the table ready for the seder, please contact Liz Jones at sagenbasil@aol.com or (860) 391-3561. More detailed information will be included in the Weekly E-mails.

**The Chester Human Library Comes to CBSRZ**

On March 6, 2016 as part of the “Books and Bagels” program, CBSRZ will host the first Human Library Forum in Connecticut. The event will be a joint effort between the Chester Public Library and CBSRZ.

The Chester Public Library has had a Human Library collection available for borrowing since 2014. It is the first and only one of its kind in the state and is modeled after the program established by the Human Library Organization in Denmark. The original Human Library was developed “to challenge societal prejudices wherever and for whatever reason they occur, and to help people form a better understanding of those with whom they share their communities.” At the Human Library Forum human books will be available to be “checked out” for 30 minute one on one sessions. You will have the opportunity to hear their stories and ask questions.

The Chester Human Library was created with this model in mind but also with the understanding that it would need to adapt to the community it represents. Chester’s Human Library collection mirrors the creative and innovative heart of our community. There is a ukulele player, beekeeper and civil rights activist among other titles. The Human Library books are wonderful resources for Chester and have created connections between residents that wouldn’t have existed otherwise.

Going forward and in preparation for the Human Library Forum, the Chester Library is reaching out to all CBSRZ members, both residents of Chester and residents of surrounding communities, to become new titles on the Human Library shelf. In keeping with the original mission of the Human Library Organization to “help build social cohesion and a greater understanding for diversity in the community locally and on a global level,” we are looking for those who have experienced prejudice due to race, religion, sex, age, sexual preference, gender identity or lifestyle choices and are willing to challenge prejudice through respectful conversation. We would also invite people who have a passion or interest they would like to share.”

The human book could choose to become part of the Chester Library permanent collection or be available only for the Human Library Forum at CBSRZ on March 6, with the option to increase participation.

For more information please contact Linda Fox at the Chester Public Library (860-526-0018).

The Human Library Forum will take place at CBSRZ at 9:30 am on March 6, 2016.

**BABIES GALORE**

Mazel Tovs are due to: New grandparents Linda and Ed Pinn on the birth of their first grandson, Zane Dow Woodcock, on Wednesday, November 11 to parents Toby Pinn-Woodcock and Richard Woodcock of Morrisonville, New York.

Misty, Matt and big sister Ruth Scoggins on the birth of Harriet Saker Scoggins on November 15.

Jackie and Lou McKown on the birth of Louis “Trip” McKown III on October 20.

And to Emily and Jeff Merriam on the birth of Asher Merriam on September 8.
Memorial Plaques
Shevet 22, 5776 to Adar 1 20, 5776
Albert Alcossor
Luba Appel
Anna Axelrod
Helen Baron
Hyman Baron
Schindel Breitman

Yahrzeits
Shevet 22, 5776 to Adar 1 20, 5776
Albert Alcossor - father of Melanie Alcossor
Vera Becker - mother of Neil Becker
Alfred Bernstein - father of Jeff Bernstein
Charles Breslow - husband of Estelle Breslow
Morris Breslow - father-in-law of Estelle Breslow
Mania Chiat - mother of Maia Chiat
Marguerite Conley - mother of Kevin Conley
Renee Davidson - mother of Shari Foley
Evelyn Diamond - mother of Barbara Mason
Sylvia Diamond - aunt of Ellen Friedman
Herman Elkin - father of Steve Elkin
Helen Feldbauer - grandmother of Jan Talbott
Lillian Friend - mother of Sheila Byrne
Flora Goldstein - mother of Harvey Goldstein
Arthur Gottlieb - father of Robert Gottlieb
Benjamin Greenwald - dear friend of Maxine Leichman
Pasquita Gutman - mother of Evelyn Foster
Israel Hanenbaum - father of Norman Hanenbaum
Raymond Hickey - former husband of Revalyn Klein Hickey
Max Hitzschmann - friend of Gene & Marilyn Kalat
Morris Indianter - father of Marcia Meyers
Ira Kalat - nephew of Gene Kalat
Anna Katz - mother of Leah Pear
Shirley Lander - mother of Marjorie Lander
Joseph Levy - father of Ruth Levy
Dorothy Luchnick - mother of Lois Glazer
Louis Mager - brother of Estelle Breslow and husband of Rita Mager
Irving Mallis - father of Linda Rigano
Ruth Meschmar - grandmother of Rachel Goldenberg
Bernard Nirenstein - father of Nancy Schwartz
Bertha Pear - loved one of Mickey Pear and mother of Martin Pear
Sarah Pear - mother of Joseph Pear
Debra Mellion Prastien - sister of Eileen Ilberman
Ray Remayer - father of Adrienne Hutt
Samuel Raymer - father of Adrienne Hutt
William Mitchell Roberts - brother of Justine Redak
Richard Schneller - husband of Mary Schneller
Nat Scholer - father of Peggy Tunic
Edith Schwartz - mother-in-law of Irving Shiffman
Evelyn Schwartz - mother of John Schwartz
Florence Sofer Raucher - mother of Alice Raucher-Morra
Fred Wackenhut - father of Lynda Wilkes
William Weiner - father of Eva Davis
Esther Wilkes - mother of Dan Wilkes
Rose Ziff - mother of Barbara Edelson

Conolences are extended to:

David Tilles and Sol Tilles, on the loss of David’s son and Sol’s grandson, Samuel Tilles.

Lynn Coville on the loss of her uncle, Donald Coville.

Please remember to inform Linda Sherman, chair of the Chesed Committee, if you or someone you know is ill, in need of help, or has experienced a death in the family.

...Our Chesed Committee is here to help.
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<td>9:30 am Hatchala 9:30 am Kadima</td>
<td>5:30 pm Facilities</td>
<td>No Kivvun. Come instead February 5 8:00 am Morning Minyan 8:45 am Religious Affairs</td>
<td>7:00–8:30 pm Mussar</td>
<td>Whole Megillah Deadline for March-April Issue 5:45 pm Tot Shabbat 6:15 pm Dairy Potluck Dinner 7:00 pm First Friday Erev Shabbat Service with Kivvun</td>
<td>9:00 am Torah Study</td>
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<td>7 28 SH’VAT</td>
<td>8 29 SH’VAT</td>
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<td>10 1 ADAR</td>
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<td>9:30 am Hatchala 9:30 am Kadima</td>
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<td>3:00 pm SSKP Board</td>
<td>8:00 am Morning Minyan 3:00 Beginner Hebrew 4:15 Kadima</td>
<td>12:00 Lunch &amp; Learn 7:00 pm Board of Directors</td>
<td>5:45 Erev Shabbat Service</td>
<td>9:00 am Torah Study 10:30 2nd Saturday Shabbat service</td>
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<td>14 5 ADAR</td>
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<td>No Kivvun</td>
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<td>No Kivvun 8:00 am Morning Minyan</td>
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<td>L’Taken Social Justice Washington D.C. 9:00 am Torah Study 10:30 am Prayer Lab</td>
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<td>21 12 ADAR</td>
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<tr>
<td>L’Taken Social Justice Washington D.C. No Kivvun</td>
<td>L’Taken Social Justice Washington D.C.</td>
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<td>8:00 am Morning Minyan 3:00 Beginner Hebrew 4:15 Kadima 7:00 Jewish Beliefs about Death</td>
<td>12:00 Daytime Lunch Program 7:00 pm Executive Committee</td>
<td>6:00 pm Shabbat across the Shoreline</td>
<td>9:00 am Torah Study</td>
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<td>28 19 ADAR</td>
<td>29 20 ADAR</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 Breakfast with Rabbi 9:30 am Hatchala 9:30 am Kadima 11:30 am Makom 11:30 am Gesher 5:00 pm Music &amp; More with Caravan of Thieves</td>
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</table>
The Whole Megillah may be viewed in color on the web at www.cbsrz.org

Many thanks to these recent Oneg sponsors

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