November & December 2015

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Maxine Leichtman: in honor of CBSRZ’s Centennial Celebration
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From Our Rabbi
From Our President
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ne of the things I’ve been most thankful for about serving as a Rabbi in our CT River Valley/Shoreline region has been my participation in a group of compassionate, inspiring, social-justice minded and very funny fellow clergy. The Valley-Shore Clergy Association is made up of ministers, priests, and a rabbi (me!) from Old Saybrook to Higganum, from Killingworth to Chester/Essex/Deep River. We are Greek Orthodox, Catholic, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist, UCC and Jewish. Every month a different clergy member hosts the rest of us for lunch, laughter, collaboration, sharing and support.

Over the years since I’ve been at CBSRZ, we’ve organized Hunger Walks, Interfaith Thanksgiving services, and Homelessness Awareness programs. Our special partnership with the United Church of Chester has led to our interfaith trip to Israel last year as well as our project to furnish several apartments for formerly homeless individuals. This wonderful group of faith communities are the main support of our Shoreline Soup Kitchen and Pantries. And we are currently investigating the possibility of jointly sponsoring a Syrian refugee family (or families).

This rich web of relationships has provided me with important professional and personal support out here, where a rabbi can feel quite isolated. It is hard to describe the immediate sense of camaraderie and empathy that a clergy group can provide.

The decision in this, my last year at CBSRZ, to have us host our Valley-Shore region’s annual Interfaith Thanksgiving service springs from the deep gratitude that I feel for my colleagues and for the connections we have with our neighbors.

I hope you will come to express your prayers of gratitude, and to be a welcoming presence at the service on Sunday November 22 at 4pm. Our choir will combine with the choirs of the area churches to create beautiful music together, and the clergy members will each have a part in leading the service. The service will, of course, be followed by food and fellowship.

LUNCH AND LEARN:
RESTARTS ON NOVEMBER 12

Rabbi Goldenberg’s monthly Lunch and Learn discussion begins again after a High Holy Day hiatus. This year we will study the Psalms, using Rabbi Ed Feld’s new book, “Joy, Despair, and Hope: Reading Psalms.”

Lunch and Learn meets the second Thursday of the month from 12-1:30pm.

No reservations are necessary. Please bring your own copy of the book, which is easily available on Amazon.com

All are welcome. Just bring your dairy/vegetarian lunch (egg salad and tuna salad are always good choices)

And of course, bring a spirit of curiosity and exploration!
Recently Adina Ripin, one of our madrichim and a stalwart member of the Search Committee, invited eight of our youths to speak on video about what they would like to see in a new rabbi. It hardly needs saying that we will deeply miss Rabbi Goldenberg. But one seven-year-old girl didn’t hesitate to spell out what she wants in our next spiritual leader. “Someone who is not strict,” she declared, “and who gives us candy.” Now, do we really need to get any more explicit than that? Her comments and others form a video section of the job description we filed yesterday with the Central Conference of American Rabbis. In preparing it, the Committee, ably chaired by Rita Christopher, has spent the last twelve weeks exploring who we have been and what we want to be.

The rabbi search can’t help but call to mind reflections that arise during the High Holy Days: who we’ve been in the past year, and who we want to be in the next. After all, we have a choice. In the Torah portion we read of Jonah, who got a clear roadmap from God—but fled instead toward the refuge of Tarshish. By contrast, we read in Genesis 12, that God says to Abraham “Lech lecha”, ‘Go out from your land, from your birthplace and from your father’s house, to the land which I will show you,” and Abraham goes.

When you think about it, a new rabbi for our congregation is a land we do not know. Yet we must head there. This is truly a turning point: new year; new logo; new website; new name, Kivvun, for youth education and a new free will tuition plan; a new century for CBSRZ. And, along side all that, a new rabbi to come. Rabbi Goldenberg has said of us that we are a 240-member congregation acting like a 500-member synagogue. So here is the question we are faced with: What can help us find the confidence to take up these hard journeys instead of choosing escape from responsibility?

We could just as easily have posed the same question one hundred years ago, when a small collection of chicken and dairy farmers gathered just across the river to open the doors of a new congregation. They selected the name “Rodfe Zedek”, Pursuers of Justice. What made those founders think they could blaze a path towards justice? Europe was being torn apart by war. Jews, just as desperate for safety as the refugees we now see streaming out of Syria and North Africa, were doing everything they could to sail for America’s shores — where they were, let’s face it, largely unwelcome. Remember that only two months before Rodfe Zedek opened, Leo Frank, a 31-year-old Jewish factory superintendent, had been lynched in Georgia in a surge of anti-Semitism. Around the same time, I recently discovered, our neighborhood association in Madison adopted rules saying that homeowners could only sell their houses to other Caucasians. Justice? It was in short supply. Yet the first parasha those Moodus egg producers would have read in 1915 in their new shul was Lech Lecha. How did they summon the chutzpah to embark on that journey toward justice a century ago?

I could ask the same question of my father. At 92, he is only a little younger than our congregation. So as we have been exploring CBSRZ’s past, I’ve thought about parallels in his story. It is hard for me to imagine him as a teenager. But I can’t help but wonder what made that scrappy young Jack Davis think he could escape the gritty, Depression-era poverty that surrounded him. He was born in Brooklyn in 1923 from parents off one of those boats pulling in to Ellis Island. Side by side with his brother Saul he would sweat day and night to help my grandfather eek a living on the street selling fruits.
and vegetables off a pushcart. “I always dreamed of getting out and seeing the world,” he once told me. “I wasn’t going to be a vegetable salesman. No way! Do you know what I did? I would take a nickel to go on the subway, and I’d head to the very first car, so I could see out the front. But instead of getting off in Manhattan, I would stay on for a whole circuit—that would be about two and a half hours—and I would see everything. For a nickel! I could see what was out there.”

Years later, for a birthday, my uncle Saul, zichrono livracha, tracked down and restored an original 1930s pushcart and presented it to my father. Now, by this time my father had become a psychologist. So Saul added a plaque that read “From Fruit to Nuts.” OK, not very politically correct, I agree. But if you think about it, concealed in that cheeky phrase lies an epic passage of lech lecha. Neither my father nor his brother were ones to flee to a Tarshish. What gave them the will, like the iron momentum of a subway train, to pursue a promised land?

* * * * *

I found an answer after walking through a modest door last April, in Jerusalem’s Old City. My wife Clo, our son Gabriel and I came face to face there with Pamela Claman, dressed startlingly in gleaming white, from toe to high-topped turban—the Shabbat bride in the flesh. It was right after Pesach, and the Clamans were hosting, as they do every Friday night, visitors from around the world looking for a place to have dinner together. There were to be some 40 that night. She ushered us to the long table where, after the meal, her husband Aba invited each person in turn to stand and relate a bit of his or her story. He asked only two favors: that we use our Hebrew names rather than our “slave” names; and that we end each of our remarks by sharing a “blessing for the Jewish people.”

We heard so many powerful tales that evening: of soldiers patrolling Israel’s frontiers; of a German raised among anti-Semites discovering his lost roots as a Jew; of a Kansan convert finding spirituality in Jerusalem; of a would-be mother coming to terms with the loss of a child. We came from so many different places, geographically, spiritually, and religiously. Yet, despite that, in using our Hebrew names, we felt mysteriously linked. And at the end of each story, as each speaker delivered a blessing for the Jewish people, we felt strangely enveloped together.

It struck me then that precisely that ultimate sense of togetherness, the awareness of a common covenant, the feeling of not being alone, was what powered Abraham, as it did our founders and, indeed, my father. And it does us today.

Symbols right here in this space remind us: the Sol LeWitt ark, with countless colored strips, like each of us, placed seamlessly together in an infinite whole; or the wooden beams of the Star of David hovering over our heads in this enveloping dome.

Experience reminds us too. In the packed shiva at the Pecks house for Paula Retsky’s friend Jimi Boos; in the bris last week for Asher Merriam; in the moving conversion service for Jackie McKown; in the Search Committee forums where nearly 100 congregants spoke of what draws them to this sanctuary; in the many bedside visits to John DiNicola, Charles Savitt, David Hays and others; in the astounding Sweet Honey in the Rock performance; And, the historic gathering to celebrate the start of our second century.

Whatever lies in store for us in our new century, may we draw strength in this place. As our Shabbat mahzor reads: “There is no way to get from here to there except by joining hands...” May we continue to reach out to each other, and make that the blessing of our people. If we do, we can move into the lands that await us.
The Pursuers of Justice and Peace Award

In a second occasion marking the centennial year of Congregation Beth Shalom Rodfe Zedek, CBSRZ is proud to announce the first recipient of our new Pursuers of Justice and Peace Award: our own congregant, Martha Stone.

This award is for a person who has made significant contributions to the pursuit of justice and/or peace, someone with ties to our area whose actions reflect the values inherent in that pursuit, values embedded deeply in the heart of Judaism, someone whose actions also serve to inspire others. It is intended to commemorate the spirit that imbued those responsible for the congregation’s existence and still animates our congregation 100 years later. It gives that spirit a concrete representation and links us and our successors in years to come with our founders and their vision.

Martha Stone meets every one of those criteria, and then some. On Saturday, Nov. 14, the Award will be presented to Martha as part of our Second Saturday Service, which begins at 10:30. We urge all congregants and all lovers of justice and peace to come and help us honor this very worthy recipient. As part of the service, Rabbi Goldenberg will be conducting a public conversation with Martha, allowing us to hear her reflect on her work.

As with all Second Saturday services, we will conclude with a pot luck lunch which will give everyone a chance to meet and talk with Martha in a more informal setting. We ask everyone to bring a dairy/veggie salad, side dish or dessert to share.

Martha has devoted her professional career to social justice, first as legal director for the Connecticut Civil Liberties Union (now the ACLU of Connecticut) and for the past 20 years as probably the most intense and effective legal representative for children’s rights, founding the Center for Children’s Advocacy in 1997 and serving as executive director of that organization ever since. She has brought her vision and passion for social justice to our own Social Action Committee as well as to her many activities in the larger world outside our walls. Her activity has resulted in many awards including, most recently, The Alumni Award from the University of Connecticut’s Law school and the Law Tribune’s Pro Bono Award.

In the March-April 2013 edition of The Whole Megillah, Susan Peck, today’s chairperson of the Pursuers of Justice and Peace Award Committee, paid tribute to Martha and her work. We are including that article here to give you a sense of what it is that Martha has done, and is doing, to advance the course of Zedek, Justice, in our world today.

Martha Stone—Action and Passion

There is a wonderful quote from a speech by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes which states as follows: “As life is action and passion, it is required of a man that he should share the action and passion of his time at peril of being judged not to have lived.” The speech was made to a Harvard Law School class on Memorial Day 1884, honoring the Civil War dead. In those days, there were only men at Harvard Law School and not even a handful of women who were even permitted to be lawyers. Back then, Justice Holmes could not have anticipated the likes of Martha Stone, a personification of action and passion, who has set a new standard for those terms throughout her career as a lawyer.

Martha Stone is the Founder and Executive Director of the Center for Children’s Advocacy, a non-profit organization dedicated to the legal rights of children who fall through gaps in services for special education, mental health, juvenile justice and abuse. Martha is an adjunct professor and teaches an internship course in Child Advocacy. She received her B.A. from Wheaton College and her J.D. and L.L.M. from Georgetown University Law Center. She was one of the plaintiff’s lawyers in the landmark desegregation case, Sheff v. O’Neill and was ecstatic to learn that recent test data shows that Hartford students who go to regional magnet and suburban schools outperform Hartford students in the regular Hartford school system by wide margins. Martha served as Associate Director of Children’s Rights, Inc., a national organization engaged in foster care litigation around the country, and for 18 years previous to that, she was Legal Director of the Connecticut Civil Liberties Union. She is responsible for bringing the class action lawsuits resulting in consent decrees involving the Department of Children and Families, the juvenile detention centers and access to community-based mental health services for the juvenile justice population. Among other honors, Martha is the recipient of the Charles J. Parker Legal Services Award from the Connecticut Bar Association; the “Phoebe Bennett” Award from the Connecticut Association of Mental Health Clinics; the “Public Citizen of the Year” Award from the Connecticut Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers; and the “Distinguished Service Award” from the Connecticut Association of School Superintendents. Most recently, Martha was named one of the 50 most influential people by Hartford Maga-
zine and New Haven Magazine and recognized for her accomplishments in their December 2012 issues.

A resident of Durham, Martha has been a member of CBSRZ for over twenty years. Her two daughters Emily, age 30, of Middletown, now herself a mother of two and a social worker at Wheeler Clinic, and Anna, age 28, who lives in Brooklyn and teaches at an urban charter school, were both educated at Beth Shalom on Union Street, Deep River, where they each became bat mitzvah. Martha is a former chair of the Social Action Committee (SAC). Social justice is key to Martha and, after a hiatus of some time, she has recently rejoined SAC and has brought to CBSRZ two topical issues of major concern to her. In January [of 2013], she was instrumental in bringing Professor Linda Meyer of Quinnipiac Law School to speak on the issue of “second look sentencing” of juveniles, an issue prompted by a United States Supreme Court ruling requiring states to review lengthy prison sentences imposed on juveniles. So much of Reform Judaism is about repairing the world, it should be a tremendous source of pride at CBSRZ that we have members like Martha who lead the way for the rest of us. When speaking about issues important to her, Martha’s passion for social justice is palpable. She puts it this way: “My commitment to social justice is paramount in my personal and professional life. If sharing my vision helps fuse social justice and the mission of congregation, this is my way to contribute.” In her view, social action should be a driving force of congregational life, in the religious school, adult programming, rabbi sermons, mitzvah projects, as well as SAC projects, to address the important social justice issues of our time that are close to home in Connecticut, such as inequality in education, homelessness, and child welfare. Martha has truly shared the action and passion of our time. Justice Holmes would be most proud.

— Susan Peck
Photo essays begin one way and end another. As you learn about a subject your perspective changes, and that allows for a richer experience. I started out thinking only about photographing the physical area and wound up making friends and hearing wonderful stories. I think the reason I was so drawn to this neighborhood and its people is that it felt very much like my old neighborhood. Hanging out there brought back so many wonderful memories of my youth spent on street corners with my friends, watching the world stroll by. My desire is to share that moment in time through these images. I hope that the viewers smile when they see them. The faces are universal, so you may find they remind you of people in your own lives.” (Steve Nadler, Artist's Statement)
Steve Nadler’s photo essay, “A Moment in Time,” opens in our Main Street Gallery, Friday, November 20th, and he will share the wonderful stories that resulted from these images in a Sunday afternoon program to be announced at a later date. One example of these stories is that of Salvatore, the patriarch of the Esposito family, who offered each of his eleven children $1000 if they named one of their children Anna, after their mother, or Salvatore. Needless to say there are now many Salvatores and Annas in the family and they all have nicknames. A building on Mulberry Street still bears Anna’s name.

Photography is Nadler’s post-retirement career after thirty-seven years in the telecommunications industry. The idea for the Little Italy photo essay developed from a course requirement while he was enrolled at the New School of Social Research in 1976. These more than thirty images represent one year of photographing the neighborhood and the people who lived there. The original photos were part of a group show at the SOHO Cooperative Gallery.

Nadler has participated in groups shows in Narragansett, Cambridge, Newport, Warwick and Cranston, and has had one man shows throughout Connecticut. He resides with his wife, Jill, in Essex, CT, and together they are active members of CBSRZ.

“A Moment in Time” will remain up through January and is open to the public Monday through Friday, from 10AM to 3PM. The artist will donate a generous percentage of the proceeds to CBSRZ for all work sold.
THE BLESSING OF A SKINNED KNEE:
Using Jewish Teachings to Raise Self-Reliant Children

A Sunday Morning Parenting Workshop and book discussion with Rabbi G., Pamela Crair and Holly Starkman Smith, based on the book, The Blessing of a Skinned Knee, by Wendy Mogel, Ph.D.

As parents, we struggle to find the balance between assuring our children that they are safe and loved, setting boundaries for their behavior, and challenging them to take risks and become independent. It is sometimes hard to know where to turn for guidance as we parent our kids from stage to stage. We might even like to think that Judaism can provide some help with our questions, but we’re not sure how to navigate the treasure trove of our ancient tradition. Thankfully, psychologist and educator Wendy Mogel’s book, The Blessing of a Skinned Knee, provides just the insights we need, drawing from Jewish wisdom to guide us in raising self-reliant children.

She writes:

Through the study and practice of Judaism, I learned that the parents I counseled had fallen into a trap created out of their own good intentions. Determined to give their children everything they need to become “winners” in this highly competitive culture, they missed out on God’s most sacred gift to us: the power and holiness of the present moment and of each child’s individuality.

For six weeks starting Sunday, November 22, parents are invited to discuss this powerful book with Rabbi Goldenberg, along with lay-teachers Holly Starkman Smith and Pamela Crair. This parenting workshop will delve into themes such as chores, discipline, the value of the present moment, eating habits, and talking to your children about God.

This is not a drop-in class. In order to create a consistent group experience, we are asking participants to sign up and commit to the full 6-week course. We will be limiting the class size to 20 and will be setting aside a number of slots for non-members. You do not have to be Jewish yourself to participate in this class, however, you should be a parent who is raising Jewish children.

Please call the CBSRZ office to register. Then you can pick up your copy of the book — our gift to you — and get started. All participants should read the first two chapters before our first class meeting.
BSRZ is not the only centenarian. The Sturgeon Queens are also 100 years old.

Please join us on November 1 at 4pm to view The Sturgeon Queens, a documentary about the famed Russ and Daughters, the family-owned shop of high-end smoked fish, caviar & New York-style specialty foods since 1914. This documentary features an extensive interview with two of the original daughters, now 100 and 92 years old, and cameos with famous customers including Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, New Yorker writer Calvin Trillin, actor Maggie Gyllenhaal, chef Mario Batali and our very own 60 Minutes correspondent Morley Safer. For more information please contact clo.davis@gmail.com.
Bar Mitzvah of
Alex Infeld

Please tell the congregation
a little about yourself.

My name is Alex Infeld. I live in Dur-
ham and attend Frank Ward Strong
Middle School. I am in the 7th grade
and my favorite class is Reading. I am
a member of Boy Scout Troop 27. I
have two brothers: Daniel, who lives
in Brooklyn, along with his wife Ra-
chel and my nephew Asher, and Zach-
ary. We recently got two new cats,
Shayna Cat Sunflower and Beaker. I
enjoy acting, singing, playing tuba and
trombone, and playing golf.

What excites you the most
about your Bar Mitzvah?

I am excited (of course) for the party,
because it will get all my friends from
around New England together. I am also
excited to read out of the Torah and
lead services for the first time.

What does becoming a Bar
Mitzvah mean to you?

Becoming Bar Mitzvah means that in
the Jewish Community, my ideas and
opinions are respected because I will
have read from the Torah and have
given a D’var Torah.

Have you thought at all
about your Torah portion?
Any thoughts on what you
will be discussing?

My Torah portion is Vayeitzei, but NOT
Jacob’s ladder, or the “Stairway to
Heaven” (Thank you Led Zeppelin!). I
am doing a trickery scene where Laban
takes the animals that Jacob wants. Jacob
by putting rods in the water trough al-
lows new Spotted and Speckled goats
and rams to be born for him to keep. I’m
most likely going to answer the question,
“Why did Laban trick Jacob twice, but
Jacob tricked Laban only once?”

Have you done a mitzvah
project? (if not, what are you
thinking about doing?)

My mitzvah project is done. My mitzvah
project was to make Monkey Fist knots
with my troop. I then sold them at the
Relay For Life that was held in June. Re-
lay for Life is a six hour event where you
walk to raise money for the American
Cancer Society, an organization that
helps people with all types of cancer. I
walked many laps in the rain and mud
on the Durham Fairgrounds that evening
and raised money through donations
from family and friends.

Any advice for kids who
haven’t begun preparing?

Practice, practice, PRACTICE! I know this
may be obvious, but you need to practice
as much as possible. Practice does not
make perfect, but it makes you really good.
Happy Birthday!
Yom Huledet Sameach!

November
1st - Alexander Infeld
4th - Erin Brennan
15th - Sarah Conley
21st - Morgan Corpuel

December
7th - Rachel Cohen
13th - Jeremy Evans
18th - Annika Liss
28th - Casey Elkin
PICTURE GALLERY

There was no shortage of energetic dancing!

Rodfe Zedek stalwarts

Fabulous food from Al Forno courtesy of Bob Zemmel shown here with his daughter and able assistant, Molly.

Definitely a happy crew at this table!
Cantor Belinda & Rabbi Goldenberg before the Havdalah service

Steven Barasz as Bernard and Director Shelley Sprague as Yetta in 100 Years in 36 Minutes

Alex Infeld and Jody Smith as combative siblings in 100 Years in 36 Minutes
Rabbi Goldenberg reading from the unspooled Torah Scroll on Simchat Torah

General rejoicing on Simchat Torah

Rabbi shakes that lulav (while holding the etrog)

Our beautiful Sukkah
Visit to the second Rodfe Zedek shul (now Christ Community Church): the CBSRZ contingent is warmly welcomed by Pastor Victoria Triano and members of the congregation.

Congregation members boarding the Chester ferry for Taschlich.
Sculptor Richard Newton at opening of his exhibit “Becoming” on Main Street

Richard Newton with Curator Linda Pinn
Our Main Street Gallery has taken on new life thanks to the new track lighting installation, the funding for which was contributed by Ellen Friedman-Smith in memory of her parents, Murray and Adele Miller. Many of you may remember Murray and Adele from their East Haddam lighting business. The Miller family was very involved in the earliest days of our Temple as Murray had served as a past president of Rodfe Zedek and was instrumental in the merging of his congregation and Beth Shalom into our wonderful Beth Shalom Rodfe Zedek.

Murray loved everything about lamps...designing, making and collecting them. In fact, Ellen says her present attic is the repository for much of his collection. She went on to tell me that she's never actually purchased a new lamp since her dad was always there ready and more than willing to fulfill her every lighting need. The handsome chandelier hanging in the CBSRZ library is one of Murray's unique creations.

How very fitting it is that our newly installed Main Street Gallery lighting should have come about in honor of a couple whose headstone is inscribed, “Let there be light.”
Another Successful High Holiday Food Drive – But Not Mission Accomplished Yet

We did it again! The morning after Yom Kippur, we delivered 2,362 pounds of food to the Shoreline Soup Kitchens and Pantries, even larger than the amount we delivered the same time last year. For the fourth year in a row, we surpassed 2,000 pounds and were again among the largest organization donations to SSKP. As reported on SSKP’s own website: “This annual food drive is so appreciated, and shows the commitment of CBSRZ to caring for others,” said Patty Dowling, Executive Director of SSKP. “By the end of summer our pantry shelves can get quite depleted, and this will help fill them again. We are so thankful to everyone at Congregation Beth Shalom Rodfe Zedek.”


Thanks to the many volunteers who gave their time and energy in making for this success. Debby Trautmann supervised the project once again, and Marjorie Lander organized a platoon of our students (including Zach and Alexander Infeld, Joe and Benny Mercier, Bryce Connelly, and Ben Rosenblum-Jones) to take time to help hand out bags on Rosh Hashanah and collect and move bags into the truck on Yom Kippur. One of the students, Grace Cohen, made a special oral appeal at the services on Rosh Hashanah. Once again, the board of directors kicked off the successful drive by purchasing and displaying a large (and, we are sure, healthy and tasty) collection of food on the Bimah throughout the High Holidays, and special public encouragement and support was received from Rabbi Goldenberg, Stephen Davis and Wendy Bayor. Congregants Gene and Marilyn Kalet helped Andy Schatz,
social action chair, and Debby Trautmann, assemble the bags. And a special thanks to Sandy Seidman, who once again made available a truck from Safety Zone to carry the food from CBSRZ to SSKP in Old Saybrook — this year, because all Sandy’s smaller trucks were required to negotiate deliveries to New York City the week of the Pope’s arrival, we had use of a huge “semi” which created quite a stir when negotiating the driveway at SSKP.

But most importantly, success would never have been possible without the participation of the whole congregation donating an amazing amount of food for those in need. Thank you all.

We are especially thankful for the active participation this year of so many of our youth, who gained invaluable knowledge that even in our own small, generally wealthy, towns, there are people who go hungry every day (see accompanying article). They, like we, recognize that this annual food drive makes only a small dent in the vast needs to address hunger insecurity. Here are some simple ways you can help the Social Action Committee fight hunger in 2015:

• Drop off food throughout the year in the boxes at CBSRZ for SSKP

• Help staff our community food sites (soup kitchens) in Deep River or Chester for even few hours a year — please contact debbytrautmann@comcast.net.

• Offer to work directly with SSKP at one of the food pantries in the area — there are so many jobs necessary to make SSKP’s operations successful — please contact http://shorelinesoupkitchens.org.


Please contact debbytrautmann@comcast.net for more information or to help further.

Social Action Committee Plans More Forums for 2016

The Social Action Committee plans another series of forums for 2016, continuing our successful series of forums this past year on “celebrating diversity,” that included discussions of anti-Semitism, immigration and Jewish views on the movement to boycott, divest from and sanction (BDS) Israel. In addition to our discussion about racism and the criminal justice system on December 5 (see accompanying article), the following are SAC’s plans for 2016.

The Right to Die with Medical Assistance — California recently became the fourth state to adopt legislation permitting physicians to help terminally ill adult patients by prescribing life-ending medications. Similar legislation has been proposed in Connecticut for several years and is likely to have significant support again next year. Polls suggest overwhelming support, but the concept continues to face significant opposition from religious communities and raises issues under traditional Jewish doctrine, all of which will be explored in depth.

Religious exceptions to civil rights laws — When should those with strongly held religious beliefs be exempted from laws of general applicability? This issue has surfaced many times in recent decades (from working on holy days to wearing veils in public). The Supreme Court decision striking bans on same-sex marriage has caused such issues to come to the fore and will likely be addressed in the years to come. For example, to what extent may a rabbi, planner, photographer, baker or musician refuse to perform for or at a same-sex wedding?

BDS and the Churches — Following our successful inquiry about the diversity of Jewish views on the movement to boycott, divest from and sanction (BDS) Israel relating to its Israeli activity in the West Bank, SAC planned on exploring our relationship with Christians and local churches as part of our “Celebrating Diversity” series, in part through discussion of the BDS issue. This has become even more appropriate in the past few months as both the Presbyterian church and the UCC church nationally have taken a position in favor of sanctions related to West Bank activities but specifically refused to support the BDS call and the breadth of that movement (whereas the UCC church in Old Lyme, which we would hope to have participate in the forum, might very well support the BDS call).

Islamaphobia — Since the attack on the World Trade Center on 9/11, policies and practices throughout the world have appeared to discriminate against Muslims or assume Muslims are terrorists, though almost all are clearly not. These issues raise special concerns for Jews, who might best understand the danger of such discrimination yet also recognize that they might more likely be the target of the rare Muslim terrorist. How do we reconcile these conflicts?

Details on dates and speakers to follow.

L’Dor Va’Dor

The heartwarming participation of some of the Religious School students in the Food Drive was very visible on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (see accompanying article), but there was a much deeper participation of the students and their teachers in our collective Mitzvah.

For several years, Marjorie Lander and Eric Infeld have sought to teach their grades 4-7 students about hunger and food insecurity. Videos about hunger in America engage the students in learning and discussion of the issue. The local issue of food insecurity in our own towns is addressed openly.

And the students learn that no problem is so large that you cannot think about solutions and take the first step. The students play roles in a game where they start out with different amounts of food and see what might be done to ensure that everyone has enough. The students write messages to President Obama and Governor Malloy on paper plates. And the students learn about food banks such as Shoreline Soup Kitchens and Pantries, and our community meal sites.

This year, we hope these students will be able to participate in the com-
CBSRZ To Sponsor a Syrian Refugee

Some members of our CBSRZ congregation know from immediate family members the heartache and history of refugees, including some whose parents escaped the Holocaust. Now we may be able to help other refugees displaced by the disruptions in the Middle East resettle in America. Countries in Europe and around the world have opened their arms to take in these refugees — some more willingly than others. Jewish organizations in the United States, including the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), have taken the lead — and worked with Arab groups — in seeking U.S. government admission of greater numbers of Syrian refugees, and churches and synagogues throughout the country have expressed interest in providing sponsorship for those refugees. The Social Action Committee at CBSRZ hopes to sponsor one or two refugee families, on our own and/or working with a church in the area.

Although some of the churches in the area have expressed interest in working with Christian refugees only, SAC is committed to helping a family in need regardless of religion. Andy Schatz, chair of social action at CBSRZ, commented that SAC would be excited to join with a local church and/or mosque to sponsor a Muslim family as a testament to the potential of Abrahamic partnership but noted the potential concern of having a Muslim family assigned to an area in which there are few Muslim residents or clear support systems, as well as few if any who speak their native language. “As Jews,” Schatz noted, “we should be particularly able to relate to being strangers in a strange land. We should try to be part of the solution if we really can be.”

CBSRZ is gaining guidance about providing services to refugees from several organizations that have long been involved in the subject before committing to a course of action. We have already spoken with HIAS, Jewish Family Services of Western Massachusetts, and Integrated Refugee and Immigration Services (IRIS), which operates in New Haven, and we have already identified a lot of predictable needs. Refugees are eligible for federal cash assistance and SNAP (formerly known as Food Stamps), Medicaid (state/federal health coverage) and have the right to work for some period of time without a special visa. However, the refugees will need help finding and furnishing an apartment and, perhaps most importantly, adapting to life in a strange land. Setting a Syrian family in New Haven would likely make more sense given the proximity of a Muslim community and resources available from Yale. Further meetings are being held to help plan a strategy for the area.

Updates and how each of our congregants can help with this effort will be included in the weekly synagogue email. All interested congregants should contact Janie Pittendrigh, who is working with Andy and the SAC to help coordinate CBSRZ’s efforts to sponsor or co-sponsor a refugee or refugee family. She suggests hanging onto gently used furniture to help out the new residents on the road ahead. Please email her at: jkpitt1@sbcglobal.net.

Human Rights Shabbat: Discussion/Action on Racist Criminal Laws

On Saturday December 5, as part of our celebration of Human Rights Shabbat, we will hold a discussion of The New Jim Crow, a book by Michele Alexander that was referenced extensively by Rabbi Goldenberg in her sermon on Yom Kippur morning (available on the CBSRZ website).

While working for the American Civil Liberties Union in California, Attorney (and now Professor) Alexander discovered that the tough “War on Drugs” laws, mostly passed in the 1980s, had indirectly deprived most young African-American men of rights as effectively as the more direct “Jim Crow” laws that existed throughout the South from the 1880s to the 1950s. These men often had felony convictions for drug possession and other non-violent offenses, accepting immediate release from jail for a conviction for a crime not committed rather than staying in jail without bail until allowed trial. They (and, indeed, most people) did not realize that the “War on Drugs” provided that felony convictions could deprive citizens, forever, of the ability to receive public assistance, housing and jobs.

The Social Action Committee has sought criminal justice reform as one of its themes over the past few years. In addition to advocating for changes in laws providing for over-incarceration, we have held forums and successfully sought reduction in the use of solitary confinement and unforgiving juvenile sentencing. The broader discussion of over-incarceration, The New Jim Crow and the road ahead is especially timely in light of the legislation passed earlier this year as part of Governor Malloy’s proposal for a Second Chance Society.

The New Jim Crow is widely available in paperback, and a few copies of the book are available from the synagogue for short-term borrowing.

This will be a public event at CBSRZ.

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.
On the Road Again

We had all the plans in place to have a home-cooked lunch at CBSRZ and talk about current events on August 27, when it came to my attention that the temple floors were being refinished and we would be personae non gratae. So some quick arrangements were made, and we were off to visit the Florence Griswold Museum for lunch and a tour of the art gallery and historic home in Old Lyme, instead.

The Cafe at the museum was highly recommended by Maxine Leichtman, and she didn’t steer us wrong. We had a lovely lunch on their patio and delightful stroll through the museum with an excellent docent.

Lunch at CBSRZ

We usually meet every fourth Thursday of the month at noon for Lunch and Program, but the calendar has not been entirely cooperative this fall. Since I doubt folks will want to give up Thanksgiving with their family, we will meet at CBSRZ on the third Thursday of November. Watch the weekly email for program information for our November 19 home-cooked lunch-eon. We will probably opt to meet the third Thursday in December, as well.

Friendly Visit Anyone?

If you know anyone who might benefit from a friendly visit, emotional support, community resource information, or assistance with transportation, please contact me at the temple office or by email at irisafreeman@gmail.com. Also, if you would like to be included in a telephonic notification of upcoming CBSRZ events, call me to add you to my phone call list.
CHESED TRAINING

Recently Chesed put on a training session for members about shiva. What is it? Why do we do it? How do we do it? Below is a brief summary of what was discussed. We will also be offering the training again this winter.

**We are not alone.** This is the fundamental message of Judaism about death and bereavement. Every law and every custom of Jewish mourning and comforting has, at its core, the overwhelming motivation to surround those who are dying and those who will grieve with a supportive community. Traditional Jewish practice requires a minyan of 10 in order to recite the Kaddish prayer. Personal bereavement is thus seen in the total context of the community. In fact, Jewish bereavement empowers the community to be God’s partner in comforting those who mourn. In making a shiva call, we are the medium through which God’s comfort can be invoked. In learning the art of coping with dying, we are, in fact, learning an important aspect of the art of Jewish living.

As a comforter, making a shiva call is one of the most important acts of condolence. But all too often those visiting a mourner’s home are not sure of the appropriate behavior. And many people do not have the slightest idea as to why they even make the shiva call or what to say when we get there. We do not know what to do, so people avoid making a shiva call altogether.

**There is no wrong way to make a shiva call.** All you need to do is show up and let the bereaved know that you care. It is about making sure the mourners are not alone, and that they know that their community is witness to their grief and providing spiritual support. You do not need to know the mourners, although certainly many do. We are there to “hold the mourners up” in our thoughts and give them a safe place to grieve.

Practically speaking, there is frequently a minyan, a short prayer service attended by at least 10 people, followed by folks sharing stories and memories of the deceased. And there is usually food, brought by friends and family, for a nosh afterwards and to leave the family with enough food that they won’t have to worry about cooking for a while. There is no formal attire, etc. If you are visiting immediately after the funeral, you will likely see a pitcher of water, basin, and towels near the door. It is traditional to ritually wash your hands upon returning from the cemetery. This reflects the belief that contact with the dead renders a person “impure.”

**What do you say?** The tradition suggests being silent, allowing the mourner to open the conversation. Simply offering a hug, a kiss, a handshake, an arm around the shoulder speaks volumes. If you do want to open a conversation, start with a simple “I’m so sorry” or “I don’t know what to say. This must be really difficult for you” or “I was so sorry to hear about ______.” Be sure to name the deceased. Why? Because one of the most powerful ways to comfort mourners is to encourage them to remember the deceased.

**Most importantly, just show up.** We are a covenantal community. We share in the joys and the pains, and are there for each other. Sometimes we need the help; sometimes we give the help. But we always show up.
Memorial Plaques

Heshvan 19, 5776 - Kislev 18, 5776

Rachel Friend
Benjamin Sprecher
Abraham Buchzeiger
Rita Rogers
Jack Banner
Regina Waldinger
Isadore elson
Minnie Rogow
Samuel Banner
Max Fine
Max Zavadnick
Bunie Baron
Rose Frankel
Jack Freed
Jacob Ronor
Isidora Baron
Joseph Katz
Rose Frankel
Yetta Sacks
Jack Baron
Josephine Gaige
Jack Freed
Selick Samuels
Rose Baron
Harry Glazer
Harry Schur
Nathan Benson
Mary Pinkus Goldstein
Lillian Shaftel
Victoria Bernstein
Sal Harris
Frances Siegel
Sam Chiat
William Kotchen
Ruth Silverman
Harry Debowksy
Harold Leichtman
Esther Sivin
Lee Diamond
Levyovdff
Arthur Frank
Helen Gilman
Jerome Fischbach
Helen Gilman
Banjamin Jackoway
Evel Yahrzeits
Heshvan 19, 5776 - Kislev 18, 5776

Abraham Baskin - stepfather of Linda Pinn
William Beckerman - father of Barbara Beckerman
Celia Braunstein - grandmother of Natalie Lindstrom
Barbara Bruno - sister of David Bruno
Marie Cassen - mother of Lois Nadel
Etta Cohn - grandmother of Gail Feld
Dora Fink - mother of Hyman Fink
Barry Gilman - cousin of Ellen Gottfried
Helan Gilman - aunt of Ellen Gottfried
Eladine Barbara Goodman - sister of Linda Polomski
Lawrence Gottfried - brother of Ellen Gottfried
Benjamin Greenberg - father of Penny Robiner
Richard Hays - brother of David Hays
Marcus Hoberman - father of Harvey Hoberman
Jack Hyman - grandfather of Stephen Davis
Benjamin Jackoway - father of Rita Fink
Dr. Maurice Jacobs - father of Stephen Jacobs
Erwin Kahn - uncle of Linda Sherman
Gister Kael - mother of Gene Kael
Patricia Konecky - mother of Sean Konecky
Steve Levinson - brother-in-law of Nancy Fischbach
Beverly Gilman McCaffrey - cousin of Ellen Gottfried
Eileen Moran - sister of Donna Amaranth
Sylvia Price - mother of Michael Price
Lubah Peck Ruben - beloved parent of Michael Peck
Dorothy Rubin - mother of Matthew Rubin
George Saffir - grandfather of Ron and Richie Glassman
Gertrude Case Sandler - sister of Lewis Case
Maxine Schaefer - sister-in-law of Johanna Schaefer
James Shipuleski - relation of Trina & David Shilling
Esther Smith - mother of Susan Furman and Martin Smith
Sol Stolowy - grandfather of Ethan Goller
Silvia White - mother-in-law of Marilyn White-Gottfried

Yahrzeits

Kislev 19, 5776 - Tevet 19, 5776

Sylvia Baker - mother of Stuart Baker
Rosella Berken - grandmother of Rebecca Blake
Alvin Bielot - father of Doreen Joslow
Gilda Biener - cousin of Eve Ber
Breindel Bloch - grandmother of Michael Cramer
Max Case - father of Lisa Case
Leroy Averill Cohen - father of Hila Rosen
Stella DeNicola - mother of John DeNicola
Hymen Farber - father of Beverly Glassman
Frances Fine - father of Philip Fine
Erwin Fischer - grandfather of Rick Hornung
Rose Goldman - aunt of Adrienne Hutt
Arthur Goldenstein - father of Harvey Goldenstein
Ethel Goodman - mother of Linda Polomski
Victor Gottfried - father of Corinne Weber
Max Guttman - father of Evelyn Foster
Victor Heller - father of Betty Gilman
Constance Hieatt - sister of Ellen Nadelman
Blanche Hutt - mother of Philip Hutt
Eileen M. Iberman - wife of Barry Iberman
Hanna Issner - great-grandmother of Janet Scharr Gochberg and grandmother of Marlene Scharr
Bernard Kael - brother of Gene Kael
Charlotte Kurtzberg - mother of Howard Kurtzberg
Michael Levy - father of Hardass Rubin
Ann Marcus - mother of Natalie Lindstrom and grandmother of Lauren Gister
Murrel Moran - mother of Donna Amaranth
Dr. Tage Nielsen - father of Daphne Nielsen
Laurette Pinn - mother of Ed Pinn
Esther Schaffer - mother of Marilyn White-Gottfried
Georganne Schrepferman - mother of Lisanne Kaplan
Marc Sherman - brother of Linda Pinn
Reverend Robert Trautman - father of Robert Trautman
Kim Turner - mother of Trina Shilling
Victor Udoff - father of Erica Udoff
Jerry Wolfe - father of Lynn Triebel
Olive Wright - mother of Doris Helbling
Yvonne Young - friend of Robert & Debra Trautman

Conlolinces are extended to:

Meg Magida on the loss of her father, Nathan Magida
Merito Elmoznino on the loss of his brother, Prosper Elmoznino
Herb Ross on the loss of his sister, Hortense Ross
Marilyn White-Gottfried on the loss of her uncle, Rabbi Harold White
Tracy Kleinberg on the loss of her grandmother, Harriet Feldmar
Rabbi Goldenberg on the loss of her friend, Amichai Yarchi
Marlene Scharr on the loss of her nephew, Robert Patkin

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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<th>SUNDAY</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>19 HESHVAN</td>
<td>9:30 am - 12:00 pm Kadima (Gr K-7) 9:30 am - 11:00 am Taste of Judaism 11:30 am - 1:00 pm Makom (Gr 10) 4:00 pm Film: &quot;The Sturgeon Queens&quot;</td>
<td>20 HESHVAN</td>
<td>5:00 am - 8:00 pm Newton Closing Reception</td>
<td>21 HESHVAN</td>
<td>4:00 pm - 6:00 pm Flu Clinic Visiting Nurses of the Lower Valley 5:30 pm Facilities</td>
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<td>25 SHEVAT</td>
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<td>3 KISLEV</td>
<td>No Kivun, come instead 11/14 4:00-6:00 pm Soup Kitchen at Chester UCC</td>
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<td>5:30 pm Facilities</td>
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<td>12:00 pm - 6:00 pm Red Cross Blood Drive</td>
<td>8:00 am Morning Minyan (Gr 4-7)</td>
<td>7:00 pm Adult Education Committee</td>
<td>5:45 pm Early Erev Shabbat service with Choir</td>
<td>9:00 am Holy Scoles 10:30 am Prayer Lab with Torah</td>
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<td>9:00 am Breakfast w/Rabbi (K-1)</td>
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<td>No Kivun - Holiday Break 8:00 am Morning Minyan</td>
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The Whole Megillah
may be viewed
in color on the web at
www.cbsrz.org

Many thanks to these recent
Oneg sponsors

Johanna Schafer
Maxine Klein & David Zeleznik
Laura Roman
Adult Education Committee
Nancy & Elliot Schwam

Mama Loshen By Marilyn Kalet

shlimazel
Everything bad happens to him
It is said that the shlemiel spills soup on
the shlimazel

kochleffel
One who stirs up trouble; busybody

farshtaist?
You understand?

balebosteh
A very capable homemaker

Ich vay nit
I don’t know

di klensteh nekomeh farsamt
di neshomeh
The smallest vengeance poisons the soul.