

Jewish Gaily Forward

"Transcend the Ordinary"

Tammuz - Elul 5777 / July - August 2017

40 Years of Vibrant Community

By MICHAEL CHERTOK

This July marks the start of our 40th year as a community. Forty years is a major milestone for any community. Sha'ar Zahav has grown and thrived to become a remarkable community and institution, and we will proudly celebrate throughout the year.

For us as Jews, marking this period is rich in significance. The journey of 40 years is core to our Exodus narrative of liberating ourselves and wandering in the desert before entering the Promised Land.

Our community has taken a similar journey. At a time when others denied us the opportunity to embrace Judaism and fully participate as queer people, we liberated ourselves by creating space to study, worship and celebrate our heritage. In our beginning, we did not have a permanent home. We found spaces to gather at Glide

"We too have transformed the world around us, and have transformed ourselves, to create a safe and welcoming home."

- Michael Chertok

Memorial Church, the Women's Building and the Jewish Community Center. Eventually, we purchased an old Mormon church in the Castro. With pluck and savvy, we raised funds for a home of our own. When we outgrew that building, we became more intentional, seeking out a space to meet our community's growing needs, raising funds, and designing and renovating our current home to establish our "Mishkan Dolores."

What is our Promised Land? Some Torah scholars say that the purpose of Israel's wandering in the desert was to transform it, to turn the desolate wilderness into a human habitation. We too have the world around us, and have transformed ourselves, to create a safe and welcoming home for ourselves and others over our 40-year history. We welcome those who often (continued on page. 9)

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Teaching Moments From Our Own History

By LEEAHT SEGEV / Director of Education



My first school year as the Education Director at Sha'ar Zahav has officially come to a close. Work is now already underway for the next school year and all the adventures and challenges it will bring. We ended this year on a high note. Our 6th and 7th grade class spent

the last few months working with a filmmaker, Henry Laurence, to produce an oral history project about the synagogue. About sixty parents, students and other community members gathered in the oneg room to see their final product.

The class interviewed two members, Irene Ogus and Allan Gold. The students crafted this project from start to finish. They came up with questions, conducted the interviews, and thought of many original touches to add to the film. Music, drawings and reflections from the class all made it into the final film. Explaining the concept of l'dor v'dor (from generation to generation) to a group of 11-13 year olds is not an easy task. Letting them experience it firsthand, however, brought the concept to life in a way that no lesson plan could. They got to hear for themselves the impact that Sha'ar Zahav had in a time that was very different from today. With no Internet or Facebook groups, how did people find each other? How did we seek out our communities? The truth is, even with all of the technology we have, it is still a challenge to this day. We are busier now than ever, and while more digitally connected, we often find ourselves less connected in our real lives. This film allowed the students and the entire Sha'ar Zahav family to remember not only why we were so important once, but why we continue to be so today. With the outside world as it is, our safe community becomes more important than ever.

I hope this film reflects what our children and our school are capable of. This film and these inter-generational days speak to me about the spirit of Sha'ar Zahav and how it is possible for children to be connected to Judaism. As adults, it is easy to get wrapped up in teaching lessons, but the best lesson is finding out for oneself. I talked in my last column about allowing children to find their own personal "why." This film was just one opportunity, and next year we will be providing many more opportunities for our kids.

Thank you for sharing your beautiful community with me this year and beyond.

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Every Person Counts

By RABBI MYCHAL COPELAND



As I was looking forward to beginning my service as your rabbi and ending my position with Interfaith-Family, I reflected on the wandering of our people in the desert which we read in the Book of Numbers.

It is no accident that we coalesce into a people while we are

wandering between places. The wilderness is a place of liminality, in-between realities.

The Book of Numbers opens with a mandate to take a census of the Israelite community through its ancestral houses. We are commanded to count people, and since the giving of this commandment, we have become quite astute at counting ourselves, usually with a good dose of worry about whether those numbers are as great as we hope them to be.

This practice of counting people is meant to teach us something else: we count ourselves to remember that every person counts. The meaning in counting every soul is that we become a

community only when we feel truly recognized as individuals.

A theme in my rabbinate has been working with people who do not feel counted. The flip side of that commitment has been working to change the climate of the Jewish community to examine what scares us and threatens us about inclusion. We can quit paying lip service to how welcoming we are and get down to the real work of appreciating the strength in our diversity. I am honored to be beginning on this path with Sha'ar Zahav, a community in which people offer their energies to create something profound, radically inclusive, and sacred.

For the last several months, I have been in my own time of counting - counting down the days until Sha'ar Zahav would become my spiritual and rabbinic home. And Sha'ar Zahav has been in its own period of transformation and transition for the past few years.

I am looking forward to meeting each member of our community, both adults and children, to understand and appreciate your dreams and goals. Thank you for inviting me on the journey as we wander through the wilderness together.

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A Unique Exhibit at the Jewish Community Library

Curated By ELAYNE GROSSBARD

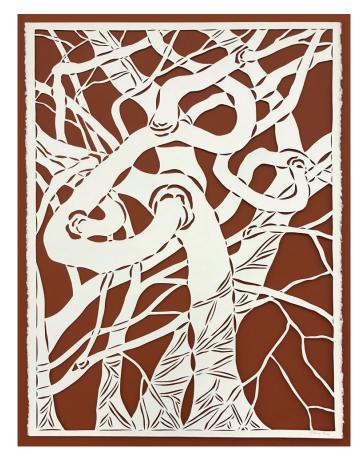
A recently opened exhibition is called **Tree** Diaries: Writing with a Knife: Works on Paper by Jane Rice

Jane, a member of the congregation, along with her husband, Michael (a member of the Va'ad) is active with the food chavurah and a regular worshipper at Friday evening Shabbat services.

She is an accomplished artist and poet, and you can see one of her framed works as you walk up the stairs to the sanctuary. Jane describes this series of papercuts as an "interplay between art and text."

She enjoys "writing with a knife...What gets cut away is as important as what is left uncut. This same tension exists between the unspoken and the spoken word."





Elayne writes: Memory is the source of Jewish self-knowledge and renewal, but is history lost to us if it remains unrecorded?

Our stories must be cherished and preserved if they are to sustain us in the present. Trees, long seen as models of steadfast strength and endurance, bear silent witness to the past.

In this exhibition, imaginary diaries give voice to the trees' silence. Their eloquent words and organic beauty awaken us to a deeper appreciation of the role of stories in our own lives.

Exhibition runs through August 27th.

See Jewishlearningworks.org for open hours.

Rising Up In Joy

By CANTOR SHARON BERNSTEIN



Last week, as part of our Pride observance, we recited the set of prayers known as Hallel. It consists of Psalms 113-118, and is recited on festivals (Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot), plus Chanukah, Rosh Chodesh and at Sha'ar Zahav on Pride Shabbat. These psalms are said to date back to the time of the Temple

in Jerusalem, where they were joyfully sung, accompanied by musical instruments.

"Hallel" comes from the Hebrew verb l'hallel, meaning to laud, to praise abundantly. Think "Halleluyah," and you've got it. But that's only half of the story. While often recited and sung jubilantly, Hallel is not about pure joy. Rather, it rises up out of pain, distress, despair. "Min hameitzar karati Yah: From the narrow place, from a place of pain, I called to God" (Psalm 118).

I sometimes envision that narrow place as the garbage compactor in Star Wars: Luke, Leia, Hans and Chewie trapped, trying desperately to get out, pounding on the walls that are slowly moving inward. That scene is fun because it's a movie, and we know that they'll find their way out soon. In real life, that place of narrowness is far narrower, far scarier, and we usually don't know when, or even if, we're going to get out of it.

The Talmud cites the prophets as saying that we should recite Hallel at times of trouble, and then, when delivered from harm's way, to recite it in thanks. In this sense, and also in the texts of Hallel themselves, one can feel strength in the joy, like a phoenix rising from the ashes.

Celebrating deliverance or progress, doesn't necessarily mean a cessation of all challenge. But it's a step on a path, and Hallel, can be a foothold on that path. While Hallel is recited only on specific holidays, I see it as a model; the idea of it gives us strength during difficult times. Hallel reminds us, that even when we're in darkness, light can come. Or perhaps that we can shine light into the darkness.

We are in the midst of challenging times in the world. May we be inspired and strengthened to dig deep and overcome challenges, rise up, and sing out with joy.

SHA'AR ZAHAV

COMMUNITY

Get To Know Rabbi Mychal Copeland

Make a connection with Rabbi Mychal Copeland! Get to know Rabbi Mychal Copeland, and give her a chance to get to know you in a small, informal gathering hosted by a Sha'ar Zahav member.

Organized by the Kesher (Connections) Committee, these gatherings will be held over the next few months and will be a great way for you to

connect with Rabbi Copeland and other congregants. If you have not yet signed up to attend one, look for an upcoming email with further details.

You may also e-mail connections@shaarzahav.org for more information.

SHA'AR ZAHAV CONDOLENCES

March

22 Edie Greenough, godmother of Greer Hauptman and friend of Trudi Hauptman

April

- 8 Irv Cole, grandfather of Melissa Breckenridge
- 12 David Bolaño, friend of Terry Fletcher & Glen Hauer
- 21 Ronald Green, cousin of Rena Frantz

(continued)

29 Jane Boskoff Graeven, former member and wife of Mark Graeven

May

- 3 Susie Dvoskin, friend of Ami Zusman
- 13 Ramuel Wasserman, father of David Wasserman and father-in-law of Neil Hart

SHA'AR ZAHAV

MAZEL TOV

Graduating High School Student's Plans for Next Year:

Sophie Cytron – Lewis & Clark College Hazel Olson-Dorf – Pitzer College Avidan Novogrodsky-Godt Columbia College of Chicago Yannai Kashtan – Claremont College

Nina Patchell – London College of Fashion Elias Rose - UC San Diego Carly Levine Ryan - University of Pennsylvania Benjamin Gustafson-Scharf - Taking a gap year Emma Simonoff - Boston University

Nachas:

Alison Green

upon being welcomed into the Covenant **Lowell Caulder**

upon being welcomed into the Covenant Maxwell Kopeikin

upon graduating from CIIS with his MA in Expressive Arts Therapy

SHA'AR ZAHAV SPONSORSHIPS

April 7-8,

Flowers by Howard Hahn, in memory of Fred Hahn, his father and a CSZ member

April 14-15

Flowers by Judith Huerta,

in honor of Marjorie Hilsenrad's Birthday

April 28-29

Flowers by James Carlson, in memory of his grandmother Giovanna Tuzzolino

April 28-29

Oneg by Richard Meyerson,

in memory of his father Stanley Meyerson

May 12-13

Oneg by Alice Harron,

in memory of her father, Meyer Jacob Harron

May 19-20

Flowers and Oneg by

Ann Bauman & Kelly Thiemann,

in honor of their 25th weding anniversary

May 26-27

Flowers by Paul Cohen & Robert Gutterman, in honor of Rabbi Ted Riter

May 26-27

Oneg by Alison Green & Lillian Sekler, in honor of Alison's entry into the covenant.

HHD Pledge

Lynn Eden **American Endowment Foundation Emily Freeman**

General Fund

Ann Bauman Allan Berenstein James Carlson

in honor of Rob Mabe entering the Covenant and Larry Wexler's service on the Ritual Committee

Ann Daniels Jonathan Funk

in honor of Rabbi Riter

David Gellman Lisa Katz

in honor of Phil Charney

Rose Katz

in memory of Marvin J Katz

Thomas Lakritz Marc Lipschutz

in honor Ora Prochovnick

Mark Lipsitz

in honor of Ray Bernstein-Lishmah Foundation

Laura Lowe Leslie Miessner

in memory of Lola Trask

Adam Pollack Ora Prochovnick Patricia Ryan

in memory of Joseph Levine

Karen Schiller **Arthur Slepian** William Smith Ami Zusman

in honor of Adam Pollack

Community Thrift Store Sage Partners

in honor of Alex Ingersoll's birthday

Rainbow 2017

Diana Buchbinder **Ann Daniels** Steven Gaynes Laura Lowe Eileen Lynette **Andrew Schwartz** Jessie Ap'neva Wayne Bender

Andrew Berger Michael Bettinger Diana Buchbinder Ellen Cleary Steve Elman

in memory of Judith Brooke Elman

Allan Gold

Marius Greenspan

Robert Katz Scott Kramer

Jeffrey Levin

Marc Lipschutz

in memory of his parents, Aaron Martin and Renee Lipschutz

Mark Mackler Thomas Raffin David Rosenzweig Beth Ross **Randall Weiss Larry Wexler**

The Rabbi Julius & Pearl Funk **Musical Events Fund**

Jonathan Funk

in memory of Bodil Gerotwol, Judy Davis and Martin Gerotwol

Evan Arnold-Gordon

in honor of Jonathan Funk

Jonathan Funk

in honor of Michael Chertok and Past Presidents for the Rutgers Hillel Journal Ad

Music in The Mishkan

Steven Mazer

Chai-Building

Allan Berenstein Allan Gold Irene Ogus Beth Ross

Chai-Cantor

Laura Lowe

Book Plate

Jeane Redsecker

in honor of Diana Buchbinder

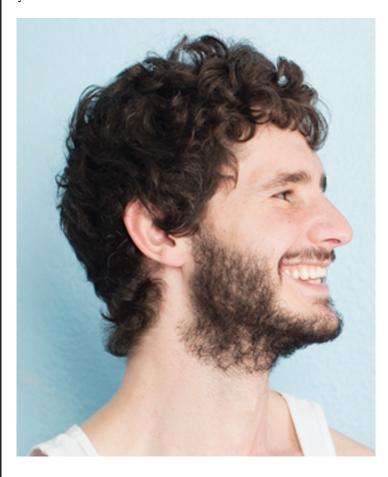
A Jew By Journey

BV DANIEL SANSON

I was born into a Catholic family of Italian lineage on my mother's side and Irish/French on my dad's. Although I was born in San Diego, I grew up in northern Florida, so, before moving to Berkeley for college, I had met precious few Jews.

Shortly after arriving in Berkeley, however, I found myself frequently mistaken for a Jew. My curly brown mop of hair was suddenly a "Jew fro," my Mediterranean features were regarded as indicative of Jewish heritage, and people found something Jewish about my style of argumentation.

I lived in a student co-op with many Jewish residents who needed frequent reminders that I did not grow up Jewish too. I soon shacked up with a Jewish boyfriend – and we're still together nearly ten years later.



I considered myself a religious, but an associate of the Jewish community. In this context, it seemed reasonable to sign up for classes and discussion groups about Judaism through CSZ and the San Francisco JCC. It didn't take long for me to feel that practicing Judaism myself just made sense.

In my Catholic religious education classes as a kid, we were presented a hierarchical concept of the church with ultimate authority resting in the hands of the Pope. That model never spoke to me.

It seemed much more natural to do as the Jews have done for millennia: follow the teachings of the local leader or rabbi, or choose the best leader for you.

The Jewish tradition of scholarship and learning in religious and nonreligious contexts also intrigued me greatly. I am a lifelong learner who is often happiest in a classroom. After a meandering journey of a couple years, I jumped into San Francisco's mikveh and became a Jew.

These days I teach at Wornick Jewish Day School, where my classroom is a holy womb of Jewish learning and life experience.

There, like in college, I continue to reside in a Jewish community somewhat confused by my origins; things might be even more complicated now that I am Jewish. I just wasn't born into a Jewish family.

I want to be able to say "Judaism chose me," but that doesn't feel quite true. I feel even less convinced by the idea that I chose Judaism myself. Instead I feel that given my life experiences, practicing Judaism is what feels good and makes sense for me. What a blessing to have found my tribe!

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT COVER

feel otherness. Sha'ar Zahav challenged the Reform Jewish movement to permit rabbis to perform marriages for same-gender couples, and to ordain openly gay rabbis.

Here in San Francisco, we were leaders in supporting people during the AIDS epidemic and the fight to change policies and increase funding for treatment, research and prevention. We raised funds to support the Aliyah of Jews from Ethiopia.

Many of our members have become clergy, sharing our values with other communities. Others have led a range of institutions to embrace our progressive values.

Today, in a country that increasingly accepts queer people, our own community now welcomes Jews by choice, interfaith couples, Jews of color, people with disabilities and more. We have transcended what was once ordinary to arrive in a place that few of us could have imagined when we started our journey.

We will give thanks to God for sustaining us and for enabling us to reach this occasion. And we will celebrate all year long! Please mark your calendar to join us for these festivities: **40th Anniversary Service: July 7th, 2017:** Services led by co-founder, Daniel Chesir and Cantor Sharon Bernstein with teaching by Rabbi Mychal Copeland and a festive oneg.

B'nei Mitzvah Shabbat: November 24, 2017: We're inviting all those who became Bat and Bar Mitvah at Sha'ar Zahav to return to participate in a special Shabbat service.

Sha'ar Zahav Clergy Shabbaton: February 23-24, 2018: We're inviting our members who have become rabbis and cantors to join us for a weekend of teaching and learning.

Past Presidents Shabbat: April 20, 2018: We will recognize a generation of leadership at a Shabbat service that helps us remember what they each brought to our community. We will also honor our many members who have served Sha'ar Zahav in countless ways throughout the past 40 years.

We hope that you, too, will rejoice with us in celebration of our past achievements and optimism looking forward. Here's to many more years as a vibrant community.

L'chaim, Michael

SHA'AR ZAHAV

COMMUNITY

Fortieth Anniversary Memories

We will be collecting and publishing your stories as part of our year-long commemoration.

Begin with one of the following suggestions:

- My first visit to Sha'ar Zahav was...
- I joined Sha'ar Zahav because...
- I did not expect to meet my bashert (intended), but I did and...
- I was so proud when I brought...
- My children learned...
- Having my wedding at Sha'ar Zahav meant so much to us and...

Please send your memories and stories to jgf@shaarzahav.org

Rainbow / Chai Campaign Overview

By MARTIN TANNENBAUM

Sha'ar Zahav depends on several income sources to enable us to be a vibrant and financially viable community.

Dues cover just half of our annual expenses. And while we have diversified our income to include renting out our building and publication sales (from siddurim and bookplates), we still rely on individual donors to fill the gap.

Thirteen years ago, we launched our first Rainbow Campaign to assure we covered annual operating expenses. Rainbow support has grown from \$40,000 in the first year to at least \$120,000 annually. While we have yet to conclude this year's campaign, we have raised \$130,000 (at press time). If you have yet to support this campaign, please go to the "GIVE" page on our web site and click on

"Support Us." Thank you to all of you who have generously brought us beyond the rainbow! These sources of income cover annual operating costs - but we still have dreams. So ten years ago, we created the "Chai Campaign." Through the generosity of a donors willing and able to contribute \$5,400 to \$108,000 over 3 years, we were able to hire and sustain a part-time cantor, publish Siddur Sha'ar Zahav and construct a new bimah.

Although we have already raised over \$200,000, we have yet to publicly announce our new Chai campaign. We are focusing on four areas: enhancing our music, refurbishing our building, enriching our school and providing resources for our settled rabbi.

If you want to know more, feel encouraged to contact Ami Zusman, ami.zusman@berkeley.edu.



July

- 1 Rachel Mailman
- 4 Edwin Gabay
- 5 Matthew Rostoker
- 6 David Roy Custead
- 9 Alexander Louis Konski
- 11 Jeanette Klein
- 18 Eli Shaber
- 20 Sarah Schumann
- 25 Seth Miller
- 30 Phillip Resnick



August

- 2 David H. Kotch
- 3 Hal Podgur
- 4 Jordan Berger
- 5 Ernie Weinstein
- Jay Platt 6
- 6 Madelyn Gross Walters
- Mark Landsberger
- 15 Maria Bautista
- 16 Peter Rosenfeld
- 18 Elliot Schneck
- 28 Jay Feinstein
- 29 Irving Ezra Segal

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High Holy Days

High Holy Days are coming in just a couple of months! Slichot starts on **Saturday**, **September 16**, and Rosh Hashanah follows close behind on **Wednesday**, **September 20**. We've already been planning for beautiful, uplifting and enriching services, once again at the Herbst Theater. One of the features that makes Sha'ar Zahav's services so wonderful is the level of congregant participation we enjoy. Many members are honored with a special reading in English, or the opportunity to open the Ark, blow the shofar, and the like.

If you are a current Sha'ar Zahav member, and would like to be considered for an honor this year, please contact Larry Wexler and James Carlson at cszhhd2017@gmail.com by the end of July. No special form is required, just a simple email to let us know which evenings and days you will be available (see below) and if you have a preference for a particular service.

Erev Rosh Hashanah Rosh Hashanah - Day 1 Rosh Hashanah - Day 2 Erev Yom Kippur Yom Kippur Wednesday 9/20/17 Thursday 9/21/17 Friday 9/22/17 Friday 9/29/17 Saturday 9/30/17 Thank you in advance for helping to make our High Holy Day services meaningful with your participation. Look for more information about the High Holy Days in the September issue of the Jewish Gaily Forward as well as in the weekly "In The Know" emails.