

**“Transcend the Ordinary”**

Kislev 5781 - Adar 5781  
December 2020 - February 2021



**Staying Grounded /** By RABBI MYCHAL COPELAND

As we enter the Chanukah season, we also begin the fourth season of our sheltering. The days shorten. Twinkling lights blink at us on our street corners to bring some glitter into the darkness. We have been bracing ourselves for the cold this year in a different way, knowing it would push us back indoors. This year of sheltering has been a constant lesson in adjusting to change. After getting somewhat accustomed to greeting people outside at a distance, finding rhythm in moving outside when the air allows, we pivot once again. We pray for, and welcome, any rain we might receive while we know that as it arrives we will need to search for new blessings in our lives.

How do we ground ourselves, when that ground keeps shifting? I've been fascinated to read over the past months what health care experts suggest to keep ourselves centered during this pandemic. Here are some recurring themes:

- Ritual and routine are key. Creating a rhythm in our boundless days helps us cope with the monotony and stress that can overwhelm us.
- Bring music into your life. We know that our souls are moved by music, and chemicals are released in our bodies that elate us, bring calm and stress relief when we play, sing, or even listen to music.
- Practice gratitude. For big things, for small things. Expressing gratitude doesn't negate pain, loss, or uncertainty. We can experience all of these emotions simultaneously.
- Connect to others and to something larger than yourself.

One study conducted at the height of the lockdown showed that membership in a religious community significantly impacted individuals' mental health. Even when people couldn't enter their place of worship they reported better mental health and less loneliness than their counterparts. When I read these what-to-do lists, I am struck by how connection to our community has lifted us up (including me) during this time. When we connect ourselves deeply to a community like ours, we feel less alone, less overwhelmed, more able to find strength to face the challenges in our lives, and more likely to feel we are part of something bigger than ourselves, a larger web of life on this planet.

**As we navigate our constantly shifting reality, I am grateful to be bringing in the light of Chanukah with you.**

**Volunteer  
Focus - pg.8**

## Creating a Bright Future at Chanukah

By MARC LIPSCHUTZ



The nation has been in crisis and the government has not promoted our values. The education of our children has been disrupted and we have been fearful to leave our homes. We have not been able to enter our house of worship and we have lost our national moral compass and identity.

These were our circumstances 2187 years ago in the Land of Israel, when a Hellenistic government outlawed Jewish religious practice, education, and cultural expression, and prohibited our entry to the Beis HaMikdash, the Holy Temple. During that national upheaval, the visionary Maccabees strategized and endeavored to co-create a bright Jewish future, and were successful beyond all expectations. Within two years, the Beis HaMikdash was rededicated, the government promoted public safety and welfare, and the first Chanukah lights of justice triumphed.

Today our Sha'ar Zahav house of worship remains closed and dark. Nevertheless, through the shared vision and committed endeavors of our dedicated rabbi, cantor, teachers, and staff,

through your active participation and volunteerism, and through the help of HaShem, we are prevailing and indeed thriving as a caring, connected, and vibrant Jewish community. And while living with unpredictability, we are journeying toward a bright new Chanukah.

Your Sha'ar Zahav Reopening Task Force is committed to a safe and inclusive reopening, following the creation and distribution of an effective vaccine and treatment, and significantly reduced new COVID diagnoses. During the interim, we are carefully evaluating the safety of possible limited and distanced outdoor gatherings, while ensuring your welfare.

What will be our Sha'ar Zahav congregational experience when we reopen? What lessons have we learned from the pandemic that can be actualized to enhance our physical and spiritual growth? What new amenities will Sha'ar Zahav provide to you? What are the goals toward which we must strive? Where do we want to arrive post-pandemic, and what do we want to achieve? Will we become a hybrid physical and online Jewish community? To answer these questions, I will convene a Strategic Planning Task Force. Through a new congregational survey we will solicit your opinions, identify your needs, and strategically plan our future. (Continued on page 9)

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Sha'ar Zahav is a member of the Union for Reform Judaism, the World Congress of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Jews, California Power & Light, and the San Francisco Interfaith Council

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## Meet Liliana Peliks

MANAGER of COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION



When I moved to San Francisco in 2008, my life changed. I was aware a change was underway, but all my guesses were far from what I have experienced in this diverse city, and how lucky I am!

In a little over 11 years, I have immersed myself in meaningful non-profit work, started a family, launched two businesses, ran some crazy relay races, birthed a pandemic, and became a Jewish professional. Oy!

I have no doubt my work at Sha'ar Zahav will lead to more personal and professional adventures. But what I really hope is that it gives me the opportunity to play a part in adding meaning to your lives, and if I am really lucky, a whole new community to call my own.

### Liliana Peliks

(She/hers/her, and for my family, ella, ela and ima)

(L to R - Noa Peliks, Hannah Peliks, Liliana and Naldo Peliks)

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Specifications supplied upon request.

## Meeting Each Moment at Beit Sefer Phyllis Mintzer

By SUE BOJDAK, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION



Not long before COVID-19 arrived, our Education Committee met for a half-day retreat to develop a value proposition for Beit Sefer Phyllis Mintzer, guided by Liliana Peliks, our new Manager of Community Engagement & Administration. The goal was to succinctly capture the essence of our program

and create a shared language with which to invite others into our community. Here is our statement:

Beit Sefer Phyllis Mintzer is a Jewish Learning Program for children in kindergarten through 7th grade whose families are seeking to come as they are and create their own pathway to Judaism with their children.

The program is designed to create rich educational opportunities to support children discovering what it means to engage with Judaism personally with authenticity, and collectively with respect and joy. Our project-based, intimate learning community partners with parents to develop their children's identities within a diverse Jewish community that is grounded in unconditional love and social justice.

Immediately following our first draft and through our continued conversations about how best to capture the wholeness/holiness of our magical community, we began wrestling with how to navigate COVID time. In the beginning I imagined we could shift our learning to be home-based with a little Zoom and finish the year's curriculum. Quickly we realized that we needed something different. We needed space to connect, opportunities to have feelings, and room to play and be together without learning outcomes.

As luck would have it we were studying Jewish migrations through history and the amazing cultural diversity that results from our extensive diaspora. Our driving question was, "Where is Home?" So we kept our question and shifted our exploration to a more intimate, immediate experience of being at home. Now we were engaging Judaism "personally with authenticity."

Once we were studying from home, people really started "to come as they are." In pajamas, with pancakes, in busy kitchens and tucked into blankets. Our "pathways to Judaism" now ran through Zoom into each other's houses and back to our own couches.

Collectively we created joy together as we adapted our morning prayer circle to sloppy Zoom singing with deep cleansing breaths. One parent described our circle time as their spiritual touchstone keeping them sane as a parent and a person through this impossible time. We continued to create this sacred virtual space for weeks after school was over, playing, creating and nurturing one another through prayer and learning.

Our plan for Beit Sefer this fall has been "grounded in unconditional love" as we have crafted a set of learning opportunities designed to lovingly meet the diverse needs of each child and each family. Anchored by our weekly circle time, we are offering group gatherings by grade, one-one learning, @home family learning boxes, outdoor meetups, and loving acceptance for those who need to step back and make their lives simpler in this time.

It turns out our value proposition isn't just helping us describe ourselves to others, it's grounding us in who we are even as we reshape ourselves to meet each moment.



## Violet Gluck



Violet Gluck, daughter of Christine Young and David Gluck, will be called to the Torah as a bat mitzvah on January 9. If this were an ordinary year, Violet would have been a seventh grader at Roosevelt Middle School; instead, with social

distancing the priority, Violet is receiving a home-school education under the mentorship of her father. Her favorite subjects at home include conceptual physics and JavaScript programming; she is also a voracious reader, and an avid fan of Greek mythology. Violet's top extra-curricular interests are Taekwondo (she holds the rank of black belt) and hip hop and modern dance.

At this moment, Violet's career ambition is to use science as a means of tikkun olam -- building on her experience leading a team of sixth graders to represent her school in the Salesforce Trailblazer Challenge, where their proposal to "seed bomb" the Amazon Rainforest won the top prize among the sixty middle schools in the competition.

Violet also comes from a theatrical family, and between the ages of 7-9, she performed more than 100 times in the hit immersive theatre show "The Speakeasy." And as a fourth grader, Violet won a city-wide bookmaking competition with her short story, "Sadness At Its Best." Despite her many accomplishments, the thing Violet loves most is goofing around with her neighborhood friends, and just being a kid.

Violet and her family would like to thank her mentor Laura Trupin, her drash mentor Beth Ross, Sue Bodjak, and Andy Fyne for all their support.

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and in memory of my mother Jan Tuzzolino,  
my grandmother Mary Jeanne Carlson,  
my brother-in-law Robert Roginski,  
and my grandfathers Arthur Carlson  
and Filippo Tuzzolino

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and in honor of the first year of mourning  
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in memory of Barbara Caplan and Bernice Frantz

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in memory of Bernice Frantz and Mike Zimmerman

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in honor of Susan Lubeck's bat mitzvah

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in memory of Frank Hyman

#### Ron Lezell

in memory of Mike Zimmerman

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in memory of Bernice Frantz

#### Steve and Florence Nacamulli

in honor of our wonderful Zoom Services!

#### Jeffrey Piade and Martin Tilzer

in memory of Payah Prochovnick and Bernice Frantz

#### Barbara Rinkoff and Ellen Murland

in celebration of Sophie's graduation  
from nursing school

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in memory of Betty Elman

#### Molly Singer

in appreciation for the High Holy Days services

**Michael Tyler, Amy Schustack and Scott Kramer**  
in memory of Barbara Caplan, Betty Elman,  
Bernice Frantz, Jack Katz and Payah Prochovnick

#### Ilana Walder-Biesanz

#### Nina Wouk

in memory of Diana Robbins and Fran Barnett

#### Ami Zusman

in memory of Payah Prochovnick, Bernice Frantz,  
Meg Chalmers and David Lubeck  
and in honor of the wedding  
of Michael Chertok and Anthony Sauler  
and the naming of Lionel Sol Harkman

## High Holy Days 5781

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#### Wayne Bender

#### Zephaniah Bensaïd

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#### Phil Charney

#### Bernard Choden and Lois Scott

#### Paul Cohen and Bob Gutterman

#### Ann Daniels and Jonathan Zingman

#### Lynn Eden and Ruth Schoenberg

#### Jim Edlin and Eve Meyer

#### Deborah Farkas

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**Judith Wolfe and Jennifer Hughes**  
**Nina Wouk and Jessie Ap'neva**  
**Frank Yellin**

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

**Jonathan Funk and John Arnold**  
 in celebration of our 36th anniversary  
 and in memory of Gustine Matt

## **Rabbi's Discretionary Fund**

**Paul Cohen and Bob Gutterman**  
 in honor of James Carlson and  
 in honor of the wedding of  
 Michal Chertok and Anthony Sauler

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**Ira Hirschfield and Tom Hansen**

## **Chai Fund**

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 in honor of the Madrichimot  
**Kelly Thiemann and Ann Bauman**

## **Cantor's Discretionary Fund**

**Sophia DeAnda**  
 in celebration of Life, Liberty  
 and the Pursuit of Happiness  
**Shawn Rosenmoss**

## **Over the Rainbow 2020**

**Jim Edlin and Eve Meyer**  
**Beverly and Robert Wesman**  
 in memory of Eva and Nathan Goodman

## **SHA'AR ZAHAV / SPONSORSHIPS**

### **AUGUST**

**21 Zoom Service sponsored by Jonathan Funk**  
 in honor of the 50th anniversary of his bar mitzvah

### **SEPTEMBER**

**4 Zoom Service sponsored by Anonymous**  
 in honor of wonderful and amazing women

### **OCTOBER**

**2 Zoom Service sponsored by James Carlson**  
 in memory of Arthur Carlson  
 and Filippo Tuzzolino

**9 Zoom Service sponsored by Ira Hirschfield**  
 in memory of Lois Hirschfield

**23 Zoom Services sponsored by**  
**Daniel Loftus and Christopher Nguyen**  
 in celebration of the naming  
 of Naya Loftus Nguyen

## 525,600

By JAMES CARLSON

Yes, that's the number of minutes in a year, made famous by the musical *Rent*. It's also the number of volunteers required to successfully engage our community in the Zoom version of CSZ's High Holy Day celebration. Or so it seemed.

We are very indebted to the clergy. There was a huge question mark about whether we would be able to deliver a meaningful spiritual experience this year. The clergy answered that question mark with a resounding YES. Rabbi Copeland and Cantor Bernstein devoted countless hours to creating segments of prayer that were specially designed for a Zoom platform. It was infeasible to merely update a prior year's outline; every service had to be conceived freshly. The end products were enormously successful.

Our normal contingent of volunteers when we're at the Herbst is substantial. The unusual requirements this year presented a real challenge, because – unlike many Bay Area congregations – Sha'ar Zahav's services were 100% live. We had no pre-recorded sessions. That feat was made possible by the expertise of 18 technical gabbaim who kept our Zoom services crisp and seamless. We owe them a great deal of gratitude. A special pair of shout-outs go to Ann Bauman and Geri Kahn who teamed up to coordinate the logistics and kavod (honor) assignments. Their plans were multi-layered. They understood the necessity to have many more contingency options this year in an untested environment, and they recruited the volunteers to fill those slots.

We had a new volunteer opportunity this year that came about with the decision to assemble gift bags. It was such a sweet idea to ensure that members had honey and apples to start 5781, and a logistic challenge to distribute. It was another example of a new challenge that we surmounted. Perhaps the greatest challenge was the one every member faced in the unusual aspect of participating in our most sacred moments over Zoom. It stands as a hallmark of our community that facing tough circumstances, we rethink what's possible, we volunteer, and we make it happen.

### HHD Committee

Ann Bauman  
Sara Haber  
Tony Harris  
Jo Ellen Green Kaiser  
Marc Lipschutz  
Mike Shriver  
Martin Tannenbaum

### Volunteers HHD 2020

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Yvette Adida  
Mike Athanasatos  
Carey Averbook  
Andrew Berger  
Ray Bernstein  
Ruth Bernstein  
Larry Best  
Tiela Chalmers  
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Frank Yellin

## SHA'AR ZAHAV MAZEL TOV TO

### AUGUST

- **Annie and Tyler Atura Bushnell**  
on the birth of Dorothea Cyan.
- **Joe and Anna Harkman**  
on the birth of Lionel Sol.
- **Sophie Rinkoff-Murland**  
on graduating from nursing school.

### SEPTEMBER

- **Daniel Loftus and Christopher Nguyen**  
on the birth of Naya.

## SHA'AR ZAHAV CONDOLENCES

### AUGUST

- 6 Kenneth Lotney,**  
father of Karlyn Isaac Lotney
- 10 Barbara Caplan,**  
mother of Patty Caplan,  
mother-in-law of Jonathan Simonoff  
and grandmother of Emma and Jason Simonoff

### SEPTEMBER

- 9 David Lubeck,**  
father of Susan Lubeck,  
father-in-law of Richard Weiner  
and grandfather of Raphael Lubeck-Weiner

### (September Continued)

- 10 Robert and Michael Fenstersheib,**  
brother and nephew of Martin Fenstersheib

### OCTOBER

- 2 Stuart Klein,**  
uncle of Larry Best
- 19 Edis Robinson,**  
mother of Nathan Robinson and Jacob Robinson
- 19 Marcia Burney,**  
sister of David Wasserman  
and sister-in-law of Neil Hart

## SHA'AR ZAHAV PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (continued from Page 2)

2185 years ago, a little cruse of oil provided eight nights of light beyond all expectations, which reminds us at Sha'ar Zahav this Chanukah of our own unlimited potential. With your help, the help of our Strategic Planning Task Force, and the help of

HaShem, we will envision and chart our path forward, identify our opportunities, operationalize our goals, reopen with celebratory and rededicated joy, and co-create our bright Sha'ar Zahav future.

## DECEMBER

Nicholas Papadopoulos  
David Glassberg  
Norman David Kramer  
Walter Palmer  
Elijah Michael Silverrod MacLachlan  
Allan Craig  
Phyllis Mintzer

## JANUARY

Aaron Nacamulli  
Gerald (Jerry) Rosenstein  
Ben Blachman  
Jerome Davis  
Richard C Wilson  
Keith Fenton  
George Ash  
Cheryl Orvis  
Bill Ashley-Dobbin  
Nathan Eli Weinstein

## FEBRUARY

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Stephen Walters  
John Atteridg  
Ziggy Gimnicher  
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## Chanukah: Let There Be Light!

Thursday, December 10 to Thursday, December 17

**Nightly candle lighting followed by  
a short activity or teaching so you  
can light and go, or stay and play!**

Each night will be led by a different community leader or group. The activities will range from storytelling, to art, to yoga. *Open to everyone.*

**More details and registration at [shaarzahav.org](http://shaarzahav.org)**