



The Jewish *Gaily Forward*

"Transcend the Ordinary"

Sivan 5781 - Elul 5781
June 2021 - August 2021



Welcome to Your B'yachad Neighborhood!

By RABBI MYCHAL COPELAND

Once again, we won't be lining up for the Pride parade this June, but we will instead mark a different milestone.

We are hoping to finally see each other in person!

Welcome to your B'yachad Neighborhood! B'yachad is Hebrew for "together," sharing a root with the final word of the Shema, One. God is One, and we are One. Over this past year we have soared as a community during challenging times, truly showing up for one another to learn, pray, grieve and act for justice, even when we couldn't be in-person.

For Sha'ar Zahav members, now we will have the chance to connect with each other in our neighborhoods. You will be hearing from a leader in your area, introducing you to others in your B'yachad Neighborhood.

In a reality which has become more locally based as we have sheltered, we will have the opportunity to deepen connections in our locales.

The regional groups will have many options, including meeting online, getting to know each other one-on-one, or gathering outdoors following safety precautions. The aim of B'yachad Neighborhoods is that you will meet other members who live near you, bolster intergenerational connections, find ways to support each other and have fun!

"...find ways to support each other and have fun!"

Each county has its own safety guidelines, and each of us has a different comfort level around COVID. As I write this in April, I am fully cognizant that we have no idea what will feel safe come June. Many will have been vaccinated by then, others not. Whatever decisions you make around safety, you are part of your B'yachad Neighborhood whether or not you choose to see anyone in person. If by June it isn't safe for anyone to meet in person, area leaders will offer online opportunities.

We are commanded to love our neighbor as ourselves. Jewish philosopher Martin Buber explains that we must deal lovingly with everyone we meet along life's road. But he goes further: When we love our neighbor, in that interaction we will experience the Divine. The one who loves, brings God and the world together - b'yachad.

**My Journey
To Judaism pg. 5**

THIS ISSUE: President's Message / Education / In Memoriam / Donations / Pride Events & More

Torah and Reopening Revelations

By MARC LIPSCHUTZ



Did you remain immersed in Torah study, throughout the night, two weeks ago? During the first Shavuot, instead of rising early to receive the Torah, we overslept! Since that time, we have atoned by studying Jewish texts throughout the night of Shavuot. In honor of Revelation, the history of our small

rescued Torah scroll will now be revealed.

Our small Torah was permanently loaned to us from Memorial Scrolls Trust. It is Torah scroll #1525 among 1564 Torah scrolls, originally from desecrated synagogues of Bohemia and Moravia, and later forwarded to Westminster Synagogue in London for inspection and cataloging.

This Torah, approximately 180 years old, was inscribed with Beis Yosef Germanic calligraphy with 54 lines per column, and was sewed using a unique German method. Parchment tanning left oil continuously rising to the surface, promoting letter fading. Additionally, this Torah has two small water stains, which most certainly resulted during a reading on a rainy morning, in a

Bohemian synagogue with a leaking roof. Nevertheless, this Torah from an unknown village is treasured as a memorial to a once vibrant Jewish community.

Torah does not immediately disclose its wisdom. Similarly, the reopening date of Sha'ar Zahav presently remains unknown. During the interim, our Beit Sefer Phyllis Mintzer and Kaf Lamed communities safely meet outdoors, distanced and masked, while additional outdoor events are planned.

“...this Torah from an unknown village is treasured as a memorial to a once vibrant Jewish community.”

Your Reopening Task Force has furthermore developed logistics for three possible Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur worship experiences. The first would be a return to the Herbst Theater with simultaneous Zoom and/or live-streamed access.

Sha'ar Zahav

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San Francisco CA 94103

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WEB <http://www.shaarzahav.org>

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

Our Journey to Judaism program is supported by grants from the National Center to Encourage Judaism

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and Kelly Theimann

Continued from Page 2

The second would be Zoom services combined with multiple in-person, member-hosted gatherings. The third would be Zoom services like last year. Our conclusive plan will soon be revealed.

Broadly administered vaccinations will ultimately enable Sha'ar Zahav to open safely and inclusively at 290 Dolores Street.

B'ezrat HaShem, with G-d's help, I look forward to greeting you in person very soon.

ANNUAL MEETING

All members are encouraged to attend our Annual Meeting on Monday, June 7, via Zoom.

Schmoozing begins at 6:45, with a 7:00 pm start of our meeting. Hear our achievements of these past twelve months and learn the results of our Congregational Survey, including implications for planning our future.

We will be voting to approve Meagan Fox, Emily Dorian, Alyss Weissglass as new members of our va'ad and approving our 2021-22 budget.

SHA'AR ZAHAV / YAHREZEITS

JUNE

Mirtha Beal
Mark B. Feldman
Duff Kreitzberg
Robert Nehemiah Mackey
Judy Macks
Rachel Mailman
Ron Miguel
Richard Rath
David Shaber
Barry Siegel
Joe Zygielbaum

JULY

David Roy Custead
Edwin Gabay
Alexander Louis Konski
Seth Miller
Phillip Resnick
Matthew Rostoker
Michael Zimmerman

AUGUST

Jordan Berger
Jay Feinstein
David H. Kotch
Mark Landsberger
Jay Platt
Hal Podgur
Peter Rosenfeld
Elliot Schneck
Ernie Weinstein

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JGF is published with a donation from Jan Half.

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The Jewish Gaily Forward is published four times a year by Sha'ar Zahav: September, December, March, and June. The deadline for submissions is 45 days prior to the publication date: July 15th, October 15th, January 15th, and April 15th. All submissions to the JGF must meet editorial requirements and length requirements.

ADVERTISERS: contact Sharon Heath at sharonh@shaarzahav.org or 415-861-6932, extension 304. Specifications supplied upon request.

Our Online Year

By SUE BOJDAK, Director of Education

At the heart of the Project Based Learning model at Beit Sefer Phyllis Mintzer is a driving question or design challenge. While typically we tackle a couple a year focused on aspects of Jewish life, this year we had one. How do we take our dynamic, hands-on, collaborative, relational learning community on-line and retain even a trace of what nurtures all of who are part of it?

We started with our anchor ritual: opening circle. We learned last spring the grounding power of shared prayer even when singing separately together. We used prayer time to lean into what we most needed. We stretched our arms wide at Hinei Ma Tov to touch one another around the Bay Area, down to San Jose and out to Sacramento, up into the Sierra foothills and all the way to Lisbon, Portugal. We “held” each other. We used the Shema to take deep breaths, to let go of difficult emotions, to breathe in hope and possibility, to ground ourselves in our bodies and imagine ourselves beyond four walls, to the outer corners of the universe into the oneness of creation. We remembered those who were ill, naming loved ones including those suffering from COVID and mental health challenges. By March students led prayers themselves, as we took shared responsibility together, just like we do in the Oneg Room.

We found a learning container that was big, flexible, and open-ended enough to hold this mysterious and unnerving journey we were taking together: the Torah. We committed to studying Torah for the whole year, knowing that we could play in it, challenge it, be inspired by it, and not have to finish anything. In a typical year we complete and share pieces of work celebrating accomplishments and discrete learnings. In this year, we needed permission not to be complete, to just explore and wonder together. Torah learning became a part of weekly opening circle as we told a story from parshat ha'shavua/the portion of the week.

In so doing, we located ourselves outside of Covid time in the flow of Torah time, allowing ourselves to be moved by the cycle of Torah and the flow of our master narrative. We wondered about what God's rest was like on the seventh day, about the angel Hagar met in the desert, about whether God was in the fire or was the fire. We were stunned by the chutzpah of the golden calf and the merciless killing of Nadav and Abihu. We wondered which mitzvot still matter today and what it means to be holy because God is holy.

In grade-based groups, students brought the text into their lives. Off-screen our youngest learners built arks, imagined angels, played with rules. On-screen they made games of creation's days and Exodus' names. Middle grade students put their hands in the Torah crafting objects from the Exodus story, experiencing it through Moses' staff, Mount Sinai, the burning bush. Our oldest students used animation and heard from congregants how Torah finds its way into their lives through their work in racial justice, climate activism, immigrants' rights.

We closed each session together in community. Students enthusiastically shared their work and thinking for the day. We enjoyed snippets of Torah culture: a Dylan song about Adam naming the animals, Mel Brooks bringing us the 15, no 10 commandments. We stretched and prayed Oseh Shalom, and we reached our hands toward whoever had a challah to “touch” someone who was “touching” the challah, closing with motzi, as we do in the Oneg Room.

How do we take our dynamic, hands-on, collaborative, relational learning community on-line and retain what nurtures all of us who are a part of it? We show up together each week. We ground ourselves in ritual and the tools of our tradition. We make space for every voice. We get curious. We play. Just like we do in the Oneg Room.

My Judaism Journey

By TIMOTHY GRANT

There are many reasons why I chose to convert to Judaism – the focus on study and the scholarly approach to understanding God, the focus on life as opposed to the reward of the afterlife, the necessity of worldly stewardship and social justice — there are so many wonderful reasons to embrace being Jewish!

If the Jewish perspective on life is what encouraged me to walk through the doors of Sha'ar Zahav, the community is certainly what inspired me to stay and consider conversion. Embracing a life of Judaism is no easy task! There are scriptures in a new language to read, holidays to plan for, mitzvot to acknowledge; if it weren't for such a loving and accepting congregation, I can imagine I would have felt overwhelmed all the time. Thankfully, I had a lot of support.

There are so many wonderful members of Sha'ar Zahav who are the embodiment of community – who embrace tikkun olam, making the world a better place, who accepted the stranger I once was, who strive to be their best possible version of themselves while helping me to do the same. It is that culture and community of consideration and self-improvement that I think continues to define my Jewish life and keeps me on this path. Sha'ar Zahav is special. It encourages us to see the uniqueness of an individual, and to incorporate our own narrative into Judaism. My narrative is heavily defined by my marriage to my amazing wife, Kelly. As a mixed-race and

mixed-faith couple on the precipice of having kids, we have had many conversations regarding how to raise our children. They will be American, Chinese and Jewish all at once – unique individuals on their own path!

As our home continues to grow, as I continue to realize my Jewish life, we know that every day will be dedicated to being the best possible family. Thankfully, we have a wonderful and inspiring community to support us.



SHA'AR ZAHAV NEW MEMBERS

FEBRUARY

Sen Talley
Rebecca Fenn
Julie Panda
Franco Martinez
Brad Tanner
Isa Elfers
Scott Bergman

MARCH

Jed Herman
Ben Posner
Eli Schlenker
Qianya Vison

APRIL

Gustavo Fierros
Jennifer Levinson
Stephen Rosenbaum
Casey Williams and Susan Strom

In Memoriam, Michael Zimmerman

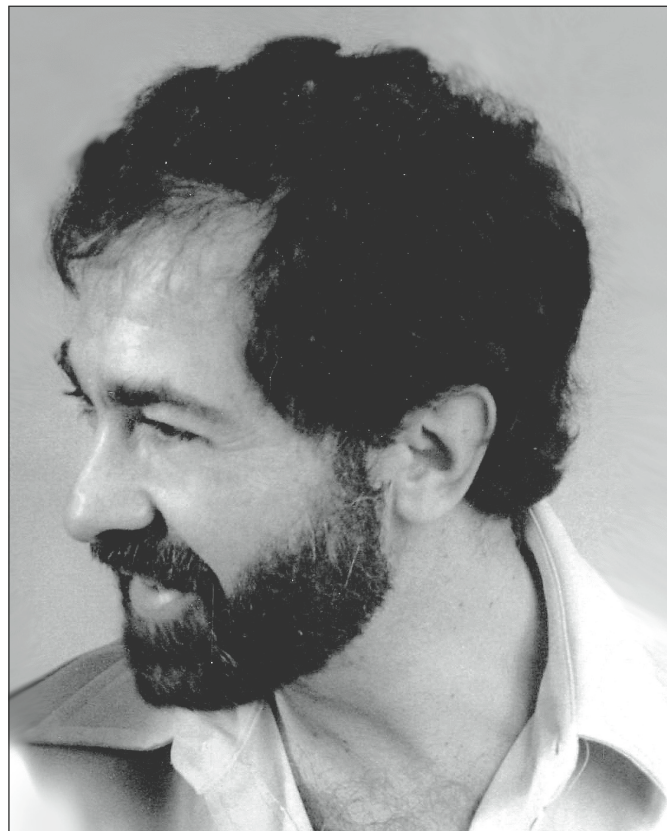
By NATHAN ROBINSON

When Michael Zimmerman joined Congregation Sha'ar Zahav in the late 1970s, he had already gotten a bachelor's degree in philosophy, a law degree, served for two years in the Peace Corps in the Philippines, gotten married, had a child, moved to the Bay Area, divorced and came out as a gay man.

SZ remained Michael's LGBTQ and Jewish community for the rest of his life. He built substantial long-term friendships, engaged in in-depth explorations of Torah and Jewish ethics, and supported the congregation as part of his commitment to tikkun olam [repairing the world].

Michael financially supported both synagogue capital campaigns - the library in the Danvers building was named in memory of his father - and he helped underwrite the SZ Yom Kippur machzor in the 1980s. He served for many years on the Dues Committee and was one of our treasurers. CSZ was where Michael's grandchild had his Jewish naming ceremony. And when Michael was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, he called our rabbi and engaged in a discussion about the Jewish way to die.

May Michael's memory be for a blessing.



SHA'AR ZAHAV CONDOLENCES

FEBRUARY

- 2 Rose Wong,**
member of Sha'ar Zahav
- 3 Marion Levenberg,**
mother of Shoshana Levenberg
- 12 Doris Pearl Clark Manning,**
friend of Janis Portal

MARCH

- 2 Joseph Piade,**
father of Jeff Piade
- 4 Florence Nacamulli,**
wife of Steve Nacamulli
and member of Sha'ar Zahav
- 8 Amy Stubblefield,**
friend of Marika Straw

MARCH (continued)

- 25 Anita Arnold,**
aunt of Jose Fernandez
- 29 Al Baum,**
member of Sha'ar Zahav

APRIL

- 2 Geoffrey Baily,**
foster son of Steve and Trudi Hauptman
and foster brother of Zach Hauptman
- 6 Sidney Brown,**
friend of Merle Malakoff and Gina Surber
- 13 Marianne Howard,**
sister of Prudence Carter
and sister-in-law of Marianne Balin

In Memoriam, Florence Nacamulli

By ANN DANIELS

There was never any doubt: Of course Florence would jump right up to sing and dance with the band in Havana. But it didn't take a special congregational trip for Florence to liven things up. Those who knew her over the years have fond recollections of joyous, hilarious, sometimes outrageous, times in San Francisco and everywhere else she lived or visited.

The word that keeps coming up in memories of Florence is "joy." More than fun-loving, Florence also had a loving spirit – she spread caring to everyone she met. During the AIDS crisis, Florence was one of the most committed members of the bikur cholim group: helping the sick, providing lunches for the homeless, developing a manual for "making life's final preparations." She was a comforting presence at the congregation's annual cemetery visits. She was also unafraid to call out oppression or unfairness when she saw it.

When Florence and Steve moved to Oregon, some of our joy went with them. But Florence showed how a little box on our computer screens can cast great light. Even those who didn't know Florence well looked forward to greeting her, and hearing her irrepressible jokes, each Zoom Shabbat.

Florence's memory is a blessing. We grieve her loss, but remember her with joy.



SHA'AR ZAHAV SPONSORSHIPS

FEBRUARY

- 5 Michael Tyler, Amy Schustack
and Scott Kramer**
in memory of our parents,
Myra Kramer and William Schustack

MARCH

- 12 Karen Schiller**
in memory of my mother, Bobbi Schiller
- 19 Nomi Jatovsky**
in memory of my mother, Margo Jay Jatovsky
- 26 James Carlson**
in memory of my husband, Richard Roginski

MARCH (continued)

- 27 Howard Hahn**
in memory of my father, Fred Hahn

APRIL

- 2 Geri Kahn**
in memory of my father, Howard Kahn
- 16 Ira Hirschfield**
in memory of my brother, Jack Hirschfield
- 23 Jay Cohen**
in memory of my mother, Mildred Cohen
- 30 Tom Medin**
in memory of my mother, Julia Medin

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in memory of Al Baum

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Jonathan Funk and John Arnold

in memory of Al Baum

Elizabeth Gazay and other friends and colleagues from the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals

in memory of Ray Bernstein

Marion Gillen

in appreciation for the support given

during my conversion studies

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in memory of Joel Hauptman and Geoffrey Bailly

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in memory of Sylvia Yellin

In memory of Marion Levenberg

Sue Bojdak and Dana Sheanin

Paul Cohen and Bob Gutterman

Susan Knox

Shoshana Levenberg

Karen Schiller

Judith Wolfe and Jennifer Hughes

Ami Zusman

In memory of Florence Nacamulli

Allan Berenstein

Paul Cohen and Bob Gutterman

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Karen Schiller

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in honor of Paul Cohen and

in celebration of Ricky's conversion

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Ilse Steirman

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in celebration of meeting my partner,

Sharyn Saslafsky, at Sha'ar Zahav in April, 2016

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Mark Lipschutz

Daniel Loftus and Christopher Nguyen

Laura Lowe

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in honor of Kendra Froshman for

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Deborah and Marvin Wasserman
Paul Wasserman
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 Sharyn Saslafsky, at Sha'ar Zahav in April 2016
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Marvin and Deborah Wasserman
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Rhonda Wasserman
 in honor of Cantor Sharon Bernstein, Paul Cohen

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 in memory of Ilse Steirman
 in honor of Howard Hahn
Ricky and Rachel Ralston
 in honor of "our wise and supportive rabbi"

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 in memory of my friend, Judy Woo
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 Carlos Fraga Nunes, Joseph Piade
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Pride Events 2021

- **Where You Go I Will Go: Same-Sex Marriage & Jewish Law**

by Rabbi Irwin Keller

Wednesday, June 2 at 7:00 pm

- **Community Pride Seder, A Virtual Celebration of Queer Freedom**

Sunday, June 13 at 5:00 pm

Two Special Pride Shabbats

- **Transgender Celebration Shabbat**

Friday, June 18 at 7:30 pm

- **Pride Celebration Shabbat**

Friday, June 25 at 7:30 pm

To register for these and other Sha'ar Zahav events, check out our weekly email or go to www.shaarzahav.org.