

“Transcend the Ordinary”

Elul 5738 - Kislev 5784
September - November 2023

CANTOR’S MESSAGE

By CANTOR SHARON BERNSTEIN



Some years ago, I decided to lead the Beatles’ “All You Need is Love” for one of our Thanksgiving multi-faith services. Easy, I thought – everyone knows it, and can sing along. I got the music online, and, oops, not so easy. You see, the opening “Love, love, love” is in a mixed meter: 2 + 2 + 3. It’s a little funky, unsettling. Mostly, you really have to pay attention. Which, I think, is something found with love in general – particularly the part about paying attention.

There’s a part of our services that is completely about love. Before the Sh’ma, it’s about God’s love for us, and following the Sh’ma, the V’ahavta is about our love for God. In both cases, love is expressed through mitzvot: God gave us mitzvot as an act of love, and we follow them as an act of love.

Judaism is centered around mitzvot, and in the paragraphs following the Sh’ma (starting with V’ahavta), we are given tangible representations of them: the mezuzah, which is hung on every doorway in one’s home (except the bathroom); tefillin (phylacteries), which are worn during morning prayer; and tzitzit (corner fringes on the tallit), which contain 613 knots, precisely the number of mitzvot in the Torah. These objects are there to remind us, in regular, constant, daily encounters, of the mitzvot, of the obligation to pay attention, to be mindful of how we behave in the world. And they are reminders of love, of the love that is behind the mitzvot. When we touch a mezuzah, when we wear a tallit or wrap tefillin, we are reminded of love: that we are loved, and that we are meant to love.

I had a high school teacher once who said love is a verb, it is action. Which is kind of the point in Judaism – love is something we express through paying attention and subsequent action. A feeling of love can shift and change, come and go, but actions can be constant. Acts of kindness, of generosity, of building, connecting, welcoming, and social justice – these are the building blocks of love. Even when things are hard, especially when things are hard, we connect, we do mitzvot, we love. It really is all we need.

**SOCIAL
JUSTICE
COMMITTEE pg. 3**

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By DEBORAH LEVY



Welcome to 5784! Sha'ar Zahav begins this new year with fiscal stability – thank you all for your continuing generosity – and a shared commitment to pray, play, work, and learn together, towards health and well-being, spiritual growth, peace, democracy, equity, and social justice – here and in Israel, informed by our shared Jewish values. Our Va'ad members are dedicated to talking through and implementing the best ways as a congregation to support each other and to

further the world we want to live in, through our discussions and input gathered from our entire fabulous community. In the coming year may we continue to awaken to how our actions can address the climate crisis, the inequities of racism and ableism, and the challenges to civil rights that threaten LGBTQ+ individuals and communities in the Bay Area and beyond. May we bring our proud Jewish voices to all we do this year, and care for each other with compassion. Shana tova u'mtukah. A good and sweet year to all.

SHA'AR ZAHAV / EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

WHO IS COMING TO SHA'AR ZAHAV?

By SUSIE IDZIK



I love speaking with our new members, hearing what draws them to this rich community. In the past 18 months, we have had 35 new member households. Those I have spoken to cite two main reasons for joining: the progressive LGBTQ+ community and the warmth of people here. They see a community that is warm and accepting, that

walks their talk, and where they feel they can find a home.

Close to 25% of our new members have recently moved to San Francisco. Some have chosen SZ over other synagogues, some have come because of someone they met, and some because of our national reputation as an LGBTQ+ progressive synagogue. Over 60% of our new members are on the younger side. More than 50% identify as part of the

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Claudia Bernard, Barbara Cymrot, Meagan Fox, Brad Friedman, Franco Martinez, Josh Muller, Tirtza Pearl, Ruth Schoenbach, Alyss Weissglass

LGBTQ+ community. 15% of our new families have come to let their children participate in Beit Sefer Phyllis Mintzer. About 2% are long-distance members who engage via Zoom. Over 10% have either previously been members or have checked out SZ in the past but felt like now was the

time to join the community.

Our new members are all interesting, engaging, and friendly. There is a wide diversity in identity, income, education, and interests. I hope you have a chance to meet them all!

SHA'AR ZAHAV SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

On April 30, a group of SZ members and friends visited the AIDS Memorial Quilt in San Leandro. The tour was powerful and very emotional for a number of people who remembered lovers and friends lost to the AIDS epidemic.

Quilt Conservator and Production Manager Gert McMullin hosted the tour; National AIDS Memorial CEO John Cunningham talked about the history of the Quilt and the AIDS Memorial Grove in Golden Gate Park, and discussed plans for a permanent display of the Quilt. Currently, the Quilt consists of almost 50,000 hand-made panels memorializing over 100,000 people who died of AIDS. Tour participants were able to request specific panels for viewing, including three panels memorializing former SZ members. Stories of lovers and friends lost to the epidemic were highly

emotional and healing at the same time. Some members of the group had participated in sewing panels; others were seeing and touching the panels they requested for the first time. Participants generously donated over \$900 to the National AIDS Memorial.

You can support the National AIDS Memorial at <https://www.aidsmemorial.org/quilt-donate>. The Grove welcomes volunteers every third Saturday, March - October, 8:30 AM-12:30 PM, and SZ is planning a volunteer work party either in July or August; please contact Eli Schlenker at elimschlenker@gmail.com. Want to help create a quilt panel to remember all SZ members who died of AIDS? Contact Tirtza Pearl at Tirtza.Pearl@gmail.com. (Sewing skills not required!)

Read a longer version of this report at <https://bit.ly/3XrPZOt>

Membership

Susie Idzik
membership@shaarzahav.org

Hineni Caring Community

If you need help or can volunteer to help other Sha'ar Zahav members in need:
Hinenileaders@shaarzahav.org

Jewish Gaily Forward

Read the JGF online:
<https://www.shaarzahav.org/newsletter/>

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ADULT B'MITZVAHS

SZ has a vibrant adult b'mitzvah program. This is the second of a series of articles featuring people who have celebrated their adult b'mitzvahs in recent years. Note: SZ honors each person's choice to use "bar mitzvah," "bat mitzvah," or the nongendered term "b'mitzvah."

Judy Katz



I grew up in Israel in the late 40s, early 50s. Girls were not allowed to have a Bat Mitzvah in a temple, and the longing for one never left me. My journey started through Sha'ar Zahav's Mussar group. I joined the B'mitzvah classes with joy and a sense of agency - no longer an intimidated twelve year old, but an accomplished, 75 year old grandma. My weekly studies with my mentor became the start of a meaningful, uplifting, spiritual journey that culminated with the elation of leading Shabbat service and reading my Torah Portion in Hebrew, my beloved first language. I was surrounded by my kids and grandkids, all my friends, and the warm Sha'ar Zahav community. Memories of my Bat Mitzvah accompany me daily.

[Editor's note: learn about SZ's Mussar group at <https://www.shaarzahav.org/groups/#Mussar>]

Tiela Chalmers

When each of my daughters were going through bat mitzvah preparation, they said to me, "How come YOU don't have to do this?" Of course the answer I gave was something like, "Because I'm a grown up. Now focus." But that wasn't a great answer. Really, I wanted that experience of learning, and challenge, and the ritual of inclusion. And I loved it. I studied, I panicked, I crammed a little, I studied some more. I felt amazed and loved and surrounded by family and community. I felt seen. It was one of the peak moments of my life.



Jim Frazin



A year before my 2022 bar mitzvah, I was excited to leyn a few verses for the first time in 62 years, at my daughter Amelia's bat mitzvah. I had never even looked at our scroll before someone handed me the yad. I was thunderstruck. The letters were cozy on the parchment. They spoke to me. I felt as though I had stepped into another world while still embedded in this one. The internalized antisemitism I'd felt since childhood melted away as I gazed on the amazing story we share. Preparing for my bar mitzvah was a consuming and amazing experience. I'd love to share my drash with you - you can read it at: <https://tinyurl.com/14-Elul-5782>.

Mike Shriver

Having an adult B'Mitzvah felt like the next, right step in my continuing journey in Judaism. Introductory Hebrew classes at SZ morphed into regular mentoring sessions with the amazing Laurie Trupin, trope lessons with Cantor Bernstein, and support and guidance from the Adult B'Mitzvah group with Rabbi Copeland and Mark Pressler. Health complications caused a three-year delay, but it was one of the most memorable and powerful experiences of my life. Looking over the crowd (and across Zoom), I felt I had brought together the meaningful parts of my life, my communities - recovery, activism, work, and Sha'ar Zahav - and I felt so fortunate.



MEET THE B'MITZVAH

Josie Fox



Josephine Hannah Fox (Josie), daughter of Meagan and Martin Fox, will be called to the Torah as a b'mitzvah on October 14, 2023. Josie is a lifelong member of Congregation Sha'ar Zahav and attends Sha'ar Zahav's Phyllis Mintzer Beit Sefer.

Josie lives in San Francisco with her parents and sister Naomi, and is a seventh grader at James Lick Middle School where she is in the debate and pride clubs. Josie loves reading, math, science, craft-making, biking, playing the viola, all things Star Wars, Camp Tawonga and connecting with friends online. Josie is naturally curious and is never shy to ask questions.

Josie is most grateful to her mentors Ila Cherney, Beth Souza, Ora Prochovnik and all the Beit Sefer teachers (past and present) for their support and dedication to her as she expresses and develops her Jewish identity.

General Fund**Frederic Bailey****James Carlson**

in memory of Ken Carlson, Carolyn Licht, and Ron Carlson

Terry Fletcher

in thanks for all the staff support for her Bat Mitzvah

Jonathan Funk

in memory of Alan Harap

Jonathan Funk and John Arnold

in memory of Joan Eglow

Stephen Hauptman

in memory of Trudi Hauptman

Liz Jaroslow**Rose Katz**

in memory of David Katz

in honor of the graduation of Ariel Bernstein Spagnolo

in honor of the graduation of Shayna Frantz Prochovnick

Ora Prochovnick and Rena Frantz

in memory of George G. Meyer

Karen Schiller

in honor of Gabriel Lampert for counting the Omer on Facebook

Trudi White

in memory of her father Ernest Joseph White

*In honor of Terry Fletcher's Bat Mitzvah***Shawn Matloob****Ora Prochovnick and Rena Frantz****Karen Schiller****Israel Trip Financial Assistance****13 Oak Fund, Jewish Community Foundation****Philip Charney****Barb Cymrot****Jonathan Funk and John Arnold****Ron Lezell****Larry Wexler****Building Security****Christopher Archuleta****Cantor's Discretionary Fund****Terry Fletcher**

In honor of and gratitude for all the help and support provided for her Bat Mitzvah

Jonathan Funk

in memory of Joseph Wiseman

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund**Richard Meyerson****Donna M Smith**

in memory of her mother, Rae Tilzer

Mia Maturen

in celebration of Zoe and Arlo's naming

Terry Fletcher and Glen Hauer

in gratitude for the Rabbi's steadfast help and support with her Bat Mitzvah

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in memory of Rabbi Julius Funk

John Arnold

in honor of Jon Funk's upcoming birthday

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in honor of Cantor Sharon & Rabbi Mychal for helping her family

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Gary Winter

Social Action Fund

Dora Casetta
in honor of Terry Fletcher

Ami Zusman
in honor of Terry Fletcher's Bat
Mitzvah

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in honor of his grandmother, Caroline
Levitt

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in honor of his mother, Julia Adele Medin

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in honor of his father, Jack Lachter

Tony Harris
in memory of his father, Howard Harris

Judy Elhauge-Roniger

JUNE

Oneg Sponsors:

The JCCSF
in celebration of Trans & Non-Binary Pride

Benny Amón and Shaina Kay
in honor of their Aufruf

Shawn, Sophie and Naomi Rosenmoss
in honor of the 32 LGBTQ individuals
killed in New Orleans arson attack 50 years
ago in the UpStairs Lounge

JULY

Oneg Sponsors:

Vicki and Gary Goldstone
in memory of Sam Lan, Jonah and Alex
Goldstone's Grandpa

SHA'AR ZAHAV / SPONSORSHIPS

Trudi White
in memory of her father, Ernest White
Kay Magilavy
in honor of safe returns for all SZ
travelers

SHA'AR ZAHAV / CONDOLENCES

**Sha'ar Zahav mourns the loss of our
member Allan Berenstein, and extends
our sympathy to his loved ones.**

In Memoriam

The congregation notes with sorrow the
deaths of:

MAY

Rae Tilzer
mother of Marty Tilzer and mother-in-law
of Jeff Piade

JUNE

Janice Stein
aunt of Rachel Nilson Ralston

JULY

Tim Cohler
father of Deb Cohler

George G. Meyer
brother of Eve Meyer

Joan Anderson
mother of Steve Anderson

Jeff Lewy
friend of Howard Steiermann

Martin Robinson
father of Jacob and Nathan Robinson

August

Frances Friedlander
mother of Ernest Friedlander

JUNE**Mario Jose Delgado (he/him)**

Mario is Cuban and lives in San Francisco. Mario came to the Sha'ar Zahav community to learn about Judaism. In 2019 he learned about the Shema Yisrael through a random video that appeared on YouTube and he was blown away by its beauty and power. Since January he has been a regular member at every Shabbat morning service and hopes to make his conversion as soon as possible as well as get involved in other activities.

Sarah Klevan, Dylan Beighley, Emmett and Beatrice (she/her, he/him)

Sarah, Dylan, Emmett (4yo), and Bea (6 months old) live in the Portola neighborhood (near McLaren Park) and are interested in connecting with other members/families for Shabbat dinners and holiday celebrations. They are an interfaith family.

Andrew Mann (he/him)

Andrew is a returning member interested in delving deeper into his connection with Judaism. He's an architect and splits his time between San Francisco and The Sea Ranch.

JULY**Catherine Armstrong (she/her)**

Catherine is from Madison, Wisconsin and lives in El Cerrito. Catherine works in the museum field, and is looking for community and friends.

Alexandra Jacobs (she/her)**Josh Muller (he/him)**

Do you have something to celebrate? Email: jgf@shaarzahav.org

JUNE**Benny Amón and Shaina Kaye**

on their wedding

Terry Fletcher

on her bat mitzvah

Dr. Allan Gold

on his retirement after 47 years as District School Psychologist for Reed District in Tiburon

Joan Toledo

on their conversion

AUGUST**Nancy Meyer and Marilyn O'Keeffe z"l**

on the wedding of their son Daniel Meyer-O'Keeffe to Eloise Hess

SEPTEMBER

John Golebowski
 Lee Giersen
 Kevin Johnson
 Bernard Pechter
 Elliot Klein
 David Pierce
 Penny Dachinger
 Mike Rankin
 Jeffrey Lewis Cohen
 Rabbi Benjamin Marcus

OCTOBER

Jeffrey A. Miller
 Duane Kearns Puryear
 Andrew Zysman
 Annye Bone
 Harry Clint Bigglestone
 Henry Mautner
 Harvey Levine
 Richard D. Wright
 Glenn Murray Miller
 Michael Mohr

NOVEMBER

Forrest Kincade
 William David Holt II
 Donald Albert
 Bruce Apter
 George Mintzer
 Sidney Rosenthal
 Chuck Norton
 Tristano Palermino
 Harvey Milk

SHANA TOVA AND SO MUCH MORE!

By LIZ JAROSLOW



When I was younger, growing up on the East Coast, Rosh Hashanah coincided with the season's transitions: leaves changing, weather cooling, putting on our new wool sweaters and heading to synagogue for the High

Holidays. I loved that the themes of renewal, goal setting and reflection from our New Year coincided with the new school year. As a Jewish educator, even in San Francisco, where the Fall actually means warmer weather, starting the school year off alongside our Jewish New Year is a gift.

Last spring, we asked our Beit Sefer students what topics they would most like to explore for the 5784 school year at Sha'ar Zahav. They wanted to learn about Jewish food, music, family stories in the Torah and their own families' stories. Our wonderful

educators and I met over the summer and designed this year's curriculum around the students' interests. We will start our new year, right after celebrating Rosh Hashanah, learning about the lunar cyclical nature of our calendar, to center our learning journeys. Throughout the year, we will engage with our own families' journeys into Judaism, how we all ended up in the Bay Area, and the myriad of Jewish customs, and cultures that intersect here.

The first day of Beit Sefer Phyllis Mintzer is October 14. If you, or a family you know, might be interested in joining us, visit <https://shaarzahav.org/religiouschool/> to register, or contact Liz Jaroslow at education@shaarzahav.org to learn more and visit us!

SHANA TOVA!

Join us to celebrate the High Holy Days at Sha'ar Zahav, in person or on Zoom

Info and registration at shaarzahav.org/hhd

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Elul and High Holy Days *Be. In Awe.*

Celebrate the High Holy Days with Sha'ar Zahav!
Sha'ar Zahav High Holy Days services and
events are free and open to all.

Saturday, Sept. 9, 8:00pm

L'eil S'lichot (Zoom)

Sunday, Sept. 10, 10:00am

Kever Avot v'Imahot/
Cemetery Visitation (Hills of Eternity, Colma)

ROSH HASHANAH

Friday, Sept. 15, 7:30pm

Erev Rosh Hashanah (Herbst & Zoom)

Saturday, Sept. 16, 9:30pm

Rosh Hashanah (Herbst & Zoom)

Sunday, Sept. 17, 9:30am

Second Day Rosh Hashanah (Zoom)

ROSH HASHANAH (cont.)

Sunday, Sept. 17, 2:00pm

Tashlich: SF at Crissy Field; East Bay at Lake
Merritt (both locations: picnic at 1:00pm, service
at 2:00pm); and Zoom (Details for all Tashlich
services at shaarzahav.org/hhd)

YOM KIPPUR

Sunday, Sept. 24, 7:30pm

Kol Nidre (Herbst & Zoom)

Monday, Sept. 25, all day

Yom Kippur - multiple services (Herbst &
Zoom)

More information and registration links
in the weekly emails and on the Sha'ar
Zahav website.

www.ShaarZahav.org/hhd