

Fran Chalin – Always in our Hearts

Larry Nathenson

If you missed the December 1 musical tribute to BCC cantorial soloist Fran Chalin, entitled "Always in our Hearts," you missed a very special evening. If you were there, you'll cherish the songs and the parodies, the jokes and the testimonials, almost as much as you'll miss Fran.

In addition to Fran herself, a choir of accomplished cantors and cantorial soloists graced the stage at Temple Emanuel of Beverly Hills – Cantors Perryne Anker, Marcelo Gindlin, Evan Kent, Sam Radwine, and Aviva Rosenbloom, and BCC members Cantor Ellen Jaffe Gill and Barry Wendell. And our special guest star Gwen Stewart, the original soloist for "Seasons of Love" in the Broadway production of "Rent," received a standing ovation for that song and for "I Know Where I've Been" from "Hairspray."

There was Yiddish, of course, with Fran and the BCC band and choir performing "Alle Brier" (All Brothers), "Bei Mir Bist Du Sheyn" (By Me You Are Beautiful), and "Lomir Alle Freylich Zayn" (Let's All Be Happy), among others. The bookends for the concert were the songs "Grateful" and "Let Music Bring us Together," the latter jointly by Fran and Tamara Kline-Rivera.

We witnessed the debut of a new singing group, Chutzpah Chayim (Elissa Barrett, Davi Cheng, Joe Hample, Lydia Katz, Tracy Moore, and Pam Postrel), whose lyrics included "BCC Island" ("Gilligan's Island"), "Rolling up the Torah"

("Proud Mary"), Oy Franele, Oy Franele ("Oh, Chanukah"), and "50 Ways to Leave the Temple." Ellen and Barry added their own take on "They Can't Take that Away from Me" (Gershwin). A few sample lyrics are printed below.

The testimonials were legion, with our Rabbi of Ceremonies Lisa Edwards presenting serious parting words and gifts, and a few limericks as well. BCC member Laurie Newman presented a certificate for Fran from State Senator Sheila Kuehl. Pam Postrel put together a video montage of Fran at various BCC events over the past 15 years, which had many of us nearly in tears. And some of BCC's youth (Lydia Katz, Shoshana and Ashira Weinreich, Eve and Matt Postrel, Benjamin Timoner, and Fran's own Eli and Rae) said and sang a few words of their own for their teacher and mother.

Our thanks for this wonderful evening go to Mindy Blum and Amanda Bender (organizers and worker bees), Ted Greenberg and Ray Eelsing (stage direction and aesthetics), Pam Postrel and Omer Bar-Sadeh (video), Davi Cheng and Joanne Laipson (graphic design), Tamara Kline-Rivera (musical producer and pianist), and Cecilia Quigley (scrumptious desserts), as well as BCC's executive director Felicia Park-Rogers, Victoria Delgadillo, and Tim Goad, and the clergy and staff of Temple Emanuel. We thank our guest musicians Jonathan Lee, Rachel Siegel, Megan

Foley, Larry Tuttle, Brady Cohan, and Novi; BCC's klezmer band Gay Gezunt (Amanda, Davi, Scott Ferguson, Jeanelle LaMance, Dave Parkhurst, Stephanie Plotin, Lauren Schlau, Tami Singer, and Rebecca Weinreich); and BCC's choir Shirey Chayim (Amanda, Davi, Ilene Cohen, Ray, Vanessa Eisemann, Liatt Granott, Ted, Howard Hamburger, Ellie Herscher, Jay Jacobs, Jeffrey Janis, Dave, Stephanie, Estaire Press, Cecilia, and Sue Terry). I'm sure I've forgotten someone; please accept my apologies.

Those who would like to honor Fran further are encouraged to contribute to the Dr. Fran Chalin Music

Continued on Page 2



Fran Chalin receives flowers for her performance at the tribute concert and for her 15 years with BCC

PHOTOS: SYLVIA SUKOP



Fran Chalin with her mother Estelle, children Eli and Rae, and partner Rob

Fund to help ensure BCC's musical legacy for the future. Thanks to the generosity of our extended community, we have already raised about \$5,000. Please contact the BCC office for further information.

And now, as promised, here are some memorable lyrics:

*Just sit right back and you'll hear a tale
A tale of a part-time gig
That started in a storefront shul
With dreams bold and big
(Dreams bold and big)*

*The congregation warmed to her
They loved her, it appears
And strange to say, Fran stuck it out
A whole fifteen years
(A whole fifteen years)*

*Got me a job in the temple
Working for Hashem every night and day
Read a little Torah, dance a little hora
Be in 50 places at one time - oy vey!*

*Big Torah keeps on turnin'
BCC keeps on learning'
Rollin', rollin'
Rollin' up the Torah*

*I want to spend more time with Eli, Rae, and Rob
But what to do, I worry so - how can I leave my job?
Still if I don't it's possible I'll just break down and sob
There must be 50 ways to leave the temple.*

*Teach a new class, Lass
Go to Michigan, Fran
Follow your dream, Queen
Just do what you need.*

And finally, one of Rabbi Edwards's limericks:

*There once was a cantor named Franny
Whose singing was truly uncanny
Her Avinu Malkeinu
Makes us say, "Dayeinu!"
We nominate her for a Grammy!*

Look for photos from the December 1 concert throughout this issue of G'vanim.

A few words from Fran:

"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow."— Melody Beattie

For the past week I have caught myself smiling and even laughing out loud when I remember moments from the tribute you so generously and lovingly produced! How do I thank you enough for all of the wonderful surprises, for the risks you took and the talent you unleashed? I have gotten calls and emails from people outside of BCC who have gone on and on about the quality and the heart of the event. Everyone agrees it was a class act!

Hospitality is a form of worship, reveals the Talmud, so if your goal was for me to feel blessed, you succeeded valiantly! You will always be in my heart!

Fran



Special guest star Gwen Stewart and Fran Chalin with the BCC choir at the December 1 tribute concert

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Rabbi Lisa Edwards is available for private appointments.

Please call at least a week in advance, if possible, to schedule.

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G'VANIM

G'vanim "Hues (of the rainbow)" is the monthly newsletter of

BETH CHAYIM CHADASHIM

6000 West Pico Blvd., L.A. CA 90035

Founded in 1972 as the world's first gay and lesbian synagogue, today BCC is an inclusive community of progressive lesbian, gay, bi, trans, and heterosexual Jews, our families, and friends. Everyone is welcome to attend weekly Friday evening services at 8:00 p.m.

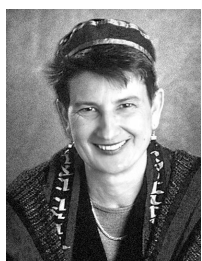
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BCC is affiliated with the Union for Reform Judaism, World Congress of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Jews and the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles.

From the Rabbi's Study...

Lisa Edwards

I recently heard yet another person remark that he and his partner are thinking of moving to Canada.



Why? "I can't stand to be in the United States anymore, I think Canada will be easier." I was eavesdropping so I didn't think I could pursue the matter with him, but I noticed my initial response was not agreement or sympathy, but resistance, even anger. It wasn't the loyal American in me responding this way to the remark; I am as critical as the next person of our country, and can easily be embarrassed by the actions of our government and/or its citizens. My response was to the escapist attitude. If the presidential election had just happened and his candidate had lost, maybe I'd dismiss it as situational depression. If he'd said, "I'm going to join the Peace Corps," I would have admired him. It was the "I want to go where it's easier" part that got me; it was the "there's nothing to be done here" attitude.

Hey! It's an election year filled with more interesting candidates than we've seen in a long time. Beyond politics, the surging response to global warming invites us in ever so many fairly simple ways to "make a difference." The recent New Yorker cartoon notwithstanding [man sitting on a couch, talking on the phone,

saying: "Making a difference doesn't make a difference." BEK, December 3, 2007, p. 72], I don't remember a time when we've been as encouraged as we are these days to focus on what we as individuals can do.

One of the most quoted teachings of our tradition opposes the escapist mentality: "It is not up to you to finish the work, yet you are not free to avoid it," says Rabbi Tarfon [Pirke Avot 2:16].

Even without leaving the country, it's possible – even easy – to withdraw, to decline to participate, to hide. But Judaism calls us into the fray, not to turn away, or run away.

On Shabbat Chanukah this past December, our Tikkun Olam Committee sponsored a panel on the environment. Saran Kirschbaum from COEJL (Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life) came to encourage us, and fill us with simple ideas, lest we feel as overwhelmed as my "flight not fight" friend.

January brings with it not only a new year, but also our annual reading of the Book of Exodus. Especially when entering Exodus coincides with an election year, I am reminded of this powerful reflection by American political philosopher, Michael Walzer:

So pharaonic oppression, deliverance, Sinai, and Canaan are still with us, powerful memories shaping our perceptions of the political world. The "door of hope" is still open; things are not what they might be.... We still believe, or many

of us do, what the Exodus first taught, or what it has commonly been taken to teach, about the meaning and possibility of politics and about its proper form:

–first, that wherever you live, it is probably Egypt;

–second, that there is a better place, a world more attractive, a promised land;

–and third, that "the way to the land is through the wilderness." There is no way to get from here to there except by joining together and marching.

[from his book Exodus and Revolution, p. 149, excerpted in Reconstructionist Shabbat siddur Kol Haneshamah, p. 768]

If getting involved in the presidential campaign isn't up your alley, look around for an alley more comfortable for you. COEJL [<http://www.coejl.org>], Progressive Jewish Alliance [<http://www.pjalliance.org>], our own Tikkun Olam working group [contact Avram Chill <hagolem@sbcglobal.net> or Joe Hample, hamplej@aol.com] –each would welcome your participation, or just your exploring their websites to get ideas for action.

One step at a time, one person at a time, one congregational committee at a time, we could make our homes, our synagogue, our city, our country, our world, a place we'd like to stay in...let's, shall we?

L'shalom,

Lisa



A few simple ideas from our Chanukah discussion:

When you eat at a restaurant, bring your own containers to take home leftovers.

Install one low-energy light bulb in your home (later another, then another). You don't have to do everything at once.

Keep bags in your car to take into the grocery store.

Encourage others and keep a clear attitude.

Student Rabbi Daniel Mikelberg, Rabbi Lisa Edwards, and Fran Chalin at the reception following the December 1 tribute concert



BCC Adult Education Moves to Saturday Afternoons

Rabbinic Intern Joe Hample



BCC's adult education series, previously on Thursday evenings, continues in January and February every other Saturday

afternoon at BCC, from 3:00 to 5:00 with Havdalah following.

Saturday, January 12, at 3:00 pm
Kabbalah & The Mystical Tradition - Roots of Jewish Mysticism

Learn how four ancient rabbis risked their lives by visiting God's pardes (orchard); how the medieval Zohar (Book of Splendor) defined an alternative cosmology; how the mystics of 16th-century Safed moved heaven and earth with their kavvanot (intentions). Judaism is immensely enriched by this esoteric teaching, often marginalized but never quite suppressed. Professor Jody Myers will join us to discuss the Kabbalah

Center and its relationship to the Jewish community.

Saturday, January 26, at 3:00 pm
Kabbalah & The Mystical Tradition - Kabbalah in Prayer and Ritual

Kabbalat Shabbat is called that for a reason: it's Kabbalah! Especially L'cha Dodi, the love song meant to bring the Shechinah (Divine Bride) home. Kabbalah also underlies customs like ushpizin (Biblical guests) at Sukkot, the Tu B'shevat seder, and Tikkun Leil (all-night vigil and study) at Shavuot. We will examine the meanings of these observances and assess their value for ourselves.

Saturday, February 9, at 3:00 pm
Modern Jewish Crisis - End of the Shtetl

In the 19th century most Jews lived in the Russian Empire with its cycles of tolerance and persecution. Conditions worsened abruptly when the 1881 assassination of Czar Alexander II was blamed on the Jews. We will explore

how the ripple effects of this tragedy transformed Jewish culture, stimulated Jewish emigration, and reshaped the Jewish universe.

Saturday, February 23, at 3:00 pm
Modern Jewish Crisis - After the Holocaust

As in Talmudic times, Jewry is bipolar today, with rival centers in America and Israel. We will compare and contrast liberal American Jewry, with its focus on universal themes, and nationalist Israeli Jewry, which revived a defunct state and a moribund language. We will seek to understand our Israeli cousins and find the family resemblance behind the outer differences.

These classes are free for BCC members. For non-members a donation of \$10 per class, or \$18 for two, is appreciated. To sign up please email bcc@bcc-la.org with Kabbalah Class (or the specific sessions you want) in your subject heading.

L'CHAYIM LEGACY CIRCLE CORNER

Chair: Ray Eelsing

Committee Members: Hannah Thiele, Bracha Yael, Tracy Moore, Evelyn Poplawski

Circle of Life' Workshops, Sundays, January 27 and March 2, 2:00-4:30 PM.

Register early for this powerful two-part Workshop! You'll compile 'Personal Planners' containing your vital documents and records, as well as important information covering various aspects of your life. The planner not only assists your executor and/or loved ones, but also acts as a quick reference guide and 'Grab & Go' binder listing important financial information, secured passwords, etc. **Participation is limited; these workshops sell out well in advance.**

Cost of materials for both sessions - \$60, otherwise free to members, \$20 for nonmembers. Registration Forms are available at BCC, or you may contact BCC Office Manager, Victoria Delgadillo at (323) 931-7023.

Quotes from the last 'Circle of Life' Workshop:

"These workshops are a real gift to the community. The caliber of people, information, and warmth and empathy of the gathering are breathtaking. Thank you."

"This was a highly informative and useful workshop. I'd take it again."

"I'd pay \$75 for the workshop, \$100 easily."

"I'm really in need of this." "Awesome!"

"Overall everything offered was excellent. Bravo to all! Well Done!"

Look for sessions on 'Elder Care' and 'California Domestic Partnerships' in Spring - Fall 2008!

If you've included BCC in your will or trust, or would like to find out more about providing a legacy for BCC, please contact the L'Chayim Legacy Circle at (323) 931-7023.

"LIVE" from the Red Tent Returns to BCC

Miri Hunter Haruach, Ph.D.

The second "Live" from the Red Tent Tu B'Shevat Shabbaton will be held at BCC on January 19, 2008. "LIVE" from the Red Tent is an opportunity for the Jewish women's community to experience, learn and grow from the many voices, faces and traditions of Jewish women's culture.

The theme of this year's gathering, "What Women Have to Say About It – The Torah: A Women's Commentary," celebrates the recently released *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*, a project of Women of Reform Judaism. In the Torah, the daughters of Zelophehad said: "Give us a share among our brothers. We are no longer willing to be left out." Instead of land, says the WRJ, we ask for something even more enduring – "Give us a share of our Torah." The result is a Torah commentary that we trust will benefit all of us. With this commentary we will continue as sisters to empower the women - and men - who come after us for generations to come.

Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie, President of the Union for Reform Judaism, has praised the text. "A wonderful rendition of our most sacred text, the Women's Commentary will bring a fresh perspective to our people's story. It will be an extraordinary resource that will prove both useful and meaningful to all - men and women alike - who delve into its pages."

Our schedule for January 19 is as follows:
2:00 - 2:15 Opening, Introductions
2:15 - 3:15 Tu B'Shevat Seder
3:15 - 3:45 Break/Schmooze
3:45 - 5:00 Keynote Address followed by Q & A
5:00 - 7:00 Breakout Sessions
7:00 - 7:30 Closing
7:30 - 8:45 Dinner Break
8:45 - 10:45 Jewish Women In Music Concert, featuring performances by Yeh Dede (World Jewish Music), Lisa Fishman (Yiddish Songstress) and others

The event ends Saturday evening with a concert of Jewish women in music, featuring Lisa Fishman, the wonderful Yiddish songstress from last year's concert, in an encore performance and Yeh Dede a musical ensemble who perform Jewish world music and others. The concert is open to the entire community.

The vision is to bring together and collaborate with a multicultural group of Jewish women to share, celebrate and reflect on the vast diversity and richness of our Jewish heritage. This year I (Miri) have been doing outreach to various communities with the hope of diversifying this gathering and thereby creating a greater synthesis of voices from within the Jewish community to join the conversation.

The inspiration for this gathering comes from the fictionalized story (midrash) of Dinah, the only daughter of Jacob, entitled *The Red Tent*, by Anita Diamant. According to this text, *The Red Tent* was the place where women gathered together to tell their stories, perform healing, give birth, menstruate and participate in numerous other female rituals. It was a time of separation from men and from everyday responsibilities. It served as a retreat and a time for renewal.

Cost for entire Shabbaton (girls and women)
Members \$40
Non Members \$50
Girls 17 and under \$25
includes seder, keynote address, workshops, afternoon oneg and concert

Cost for concert only (open to the entire community)
Members \$10
Non Members \$20

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Ritual Committee Update -- After Fran

Aaron Tornell

As we all know, Fran's tenure with BCC ended on December 31, 2007. All of us will greatly miss Fran's infectious enthusiasm, as well as her nigunim and Yiddishe lidelech.

During the ensuing transition, the Ritual Committee will do its best to continue Fran's wonderful tradition of welcoming Shabbat with music and spirituality. We have all come to recognize the power of music in our Shabbat services. BCC's success with Ruach Chayim as well as our special Shabbatot with our klezmer band Gay Gezunt and our choir, has led us to believe that we can reach out to our members and others through spiritual music programs. The Ritual Committee will explore a variety of music programs in an effort to make our members and guests feel hamish.

Our upcoming services will include Rabbi Edwards and student rabbis, BCC lay leaders, and invited cantors. We will continue to schedule Ruach Chayim on the last Shabbat of every month with Rabbi Edwards, student rabbis Josh Whinston and Beau Shapiro, and the great drummer Amir Magal.

In January and February the rabbis will be joined by several of our lay leaders: Robin Berkovitz, Davi Cheng, Miri Hunter Haruach and Herb Toplan. In addition, on January 11 we have invited Ron Galperin to be our guest cantor. Ron has been with us several times and is the partner of Rabbi Zach

Shapiro.

On February 8 we have invited Stephanie Valadez to lead a Ladino style Shabbat. Stephanie will bring to us the wonderful tunes of the brachot that the Sephardic Jews sang before the 1492 expulsion from Spain. Stephanie has been with us singing together with Fran on the bimah. See the calendar page for the complete schedule of service leaders.

The Ritual Committee hopes that our upcoming services will fill BCC with the spirituality and hamishkeit that has always been the hallmark of our synagogue. We would greatly appreciate any feedback that you wish to provide to us.

Cara Hanes
Karen Schwartz
Aaron Tornell

*Ritual Committee chair
Aaron Tornell (right) and his
partner Denis Hiebsch at the
reception following the
December 1 tribute concert*



PHOTO: SYLVIA SUKOP

Farewell and Toda to Rabbi Aaron Katz

Maggie Parkhurst

In February 2002, BCC's Talmud class found itself with an unusual new teacher, Rabbi Aaron Katz. Although it was difficult to understand his English at times, we soon learned that his personal story was as fascinating as the texts he taught us. Born in Argentina, Aaron had left home at 18 to further his Jewish studies in Israel, eventually receiving Smicha from the Chief Rabbinate in Jerusalem. For the next 14 years, he served as Chief Rabbi of Sweden. He then returned to Israel with his family, dividing his time between rabbinic duties in Jerusalem and teaching at the Freie University of Berlin.

Our Talmud class listened wide-eyed as he explained his double life – in Jerusalem as a respected Orthodox rabbi with a wife and five children, and in Berlin as a gay professor who shared an apartment with his lover. He maintained this subterfuge for eight years, until, as those of us who heard his

shattering Yom Kippur drash that year recall, he was outed and his carefully crafted world came crashing down. Unemployable as a rabbi in Israel and Europe, Aaron fled to Los Angeles, where he discovered in BCC a place where the previously impossible became possible: now he could be openly gay and Jewish.

With his outstanding credentials, BCC quickly hired him as our Scholar-in-Residence, where he has taught both adults and children with his unique style. He also found a job teaching rabbinic students at the Academy of Jewish Religion. But another community discovered his exceptional abilities as well, as Aaron began teaching an 'Intro to Judaism' class in Spanish at Temple Shalom in Whittier. Last year, when their rabbi retired, the congregation offered that post to Aaron. And so we bid a fond and reluctant farewell to Rabbi Aaron Katz and wish him good luck in his new rabbinic position and all his future endeavors.

BCC Men's Havurah

Jerry Nodiff and Mike Halstater

The Men's Havurah welcomes all BCC men and their friends, singles and couples. It offers a mix of home-hosted and public events, and meets roughly once a month. Past events have included patio parties, brunches and dinners in restaurants, pot lucks in member's homes, and more.

Saturday, January 12, 2008: Tenth Anniversary Celebration

The Men's Havurah is celebrating its tenth anniversary and you are invited! During these past ten years, the group has offered roughly 90 events to BCC men and their friends. We are marking the occasion on Saturday, January 26, at 6:30 pm, with Havdalah and a catered Mediterranean vegetarian dinner followed by entertainment. Cantor Marcelo Gindlin will lead Havdalah and offer a melodious mix of songs. Location is the home of Noel Salisbury in Larchmont Village. Prices are \$23 for BCC members and \$25 for non-members. Space is limited to 35 persons.

The firm deadline is Tuesday, January 8, to assist the caterer. To guarantee your place, please send your check to BCC (BCC, 6000 W. Pico Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90035), and indicate Men's Havurah Anniversary in the memo area on your check. For directions, please contact Noel at noelsalisbury@aol.com or 323-469-2966. *Don't miss this special milestone evening!*

We ask that you bring a folding chair. If you can assist setting up for the evening, please email Mike at mikeyh2@earthlink.net.

Saturday, February 23, 2008: Vegetarian Potluck and Game Night

It is a vegetarian potluck and game night for our February event! We will gather on Saturday, February 23, at 6:30 pm, to share your favorite foods and games plus Havdalah. Please bring enough food for 8 people and at least 1 game.

Ricky Zlotowitz will be hosting at his home in North Hollywood. Please RSVP to him at ricketze@aol.com or 818 -982-1950 so he can coordinate food. There will be a charge of \$3 for BCC Members and \$5 for non-members payable at the event. Deadline is Wednesday, February 20, 2008. Suggested potluck contributions by last name are:

- A - G Appetizer or Salad
- H - N Entrée or Vegetable
- O - S Dessert
- T - Z Beverage

If you have questions regarding either event, please email Mike at mikeyh2@earthlink.net or call Jerry at 310-450-9520. We look forward to seeing you at both events!



Guest cantors at the December 1 tribute concert, from left: Evan Kent, Marcelo Gindlin, Barry Wendell, Aviva Rosenbloom, Perryne Anker, Ellen Jaffe Gill, Sam Radwine



The new singing ensemble Chutzpah Chayim, from left: Elissa Barrett, Lydia Katz, Tracy Moore, Pam Postrel, Davi Cheng, and Joe Hample

BCC Book Group

Larry Nathenson

For over ten years, BCC members and friends have gathered in private homes for monthly potluck brunches and discussion of books selected by the group. Fiction and non-fiction, historical and contemporary, American and Israeli, the books read by the group include something for everyone's tastes and interests. Our next two book discussions are:

Sunday, January 27, at 10:00 a.m.

Stardust Lost: The Triumph, Tragedy, and Meshugas of the Yiddish Theater in America, by Stefan Kanfer.

A history of American Yiddish theater as a part of the immigrant experience, and as a continuation of European traditions, complete with both onstage and behind the scenes activities and portraits of the writers, actors, directors, producers, and many others who made it possible.

Sunday, February 24, at 10:00 a.m.

The Book Thief, by Markus Zusak.

Marketed as a "young adult" novel, this tale of a teenage girl in Nazi Germany has a very adult plot with adult implications. Death itself is the narrator, and the theft of books and of human lives is the theme, but courage ultimately prevails.

BCC members and non-members alike are invited to attend. Because the discussions are held in members' homes, space is limited. Please RSVP to the BCC office early to guarantee your seat at the table, or contact Larry Nathenson at Larrynath@aol.com.

Ohr Chayim - Teaching Our "Devarim" to our Children

Leah Zimmerman



We read regularly in the Shema the words "And these devarim (things/words) which I command you today you will take to heart - you will teach them to your children." These words from Deuteronomy teach us how important it is to teach our children that which is important to us. What are these devarim that we take to heart and

that we want to be sure we teach our children? Which devarim specifically are being referenced here? The question resonates for me at this time as I learn what it means to be an educator at BCC. What are the devarim that the members of BCC individually and collectively want to teach the BCC children?

I would like to suggest that we look to the next part of the V'ahavta prayer for clues. The next part of the paragraph tells us that we will say these devarim at home and away, morning and night. I believe that if we examine our lives and our conversations and notice what we do talk to our children about—our own and those of our friends, our nieces, nephews, cousins, and others—at home and away from home, in the morning and at night, that we will find what it is we feel is important to teach them. I propose that the devarim which have been "commanded" of us in this paragraph are the aspects of Tradition and Torah that resonate for us so strongly that they become imperatives.

In my role as Director of Education at BCC, I am the main facilitator of fulfilling this mitzvah of teaching our children. I create

the educational environment, planning and programming with which we teach the BCC children these "devarim." So, I have been asking, listening, looking and learning what it is that BCC as a community values Jewishly. What are the imperatives that motivate this community and what are the values that should be embodied in our education program?

I would like to share with you my current perceptions and what guides my planning so far. I notice that BCC is a friendly, welcoming place that accepts people as they are. This is a community that takes the idea of treating each person "betzelem Elohim" seriously. I am touched and impressed when I see the way people greet each other, listen to each other, tell stories, laugh and sing together. I have sense that this is a congregation that values relationships and displays a strong sense of community. I appreciate the way that Jewish heritage and tradition is respected at BCC yet often reinterpreted and presented playfully.

What I am hoping to learn more from the members of BCC is how we individually and communally interpret the meaning of "devarim" and what the words are which we most want to share our children. What are the imperatives that you feel in your life and how do they intersect with Judaism? What do you consider vital for a young child growing up as a Jew to know and learn about Judaism?

I am looking forward to hearing from members and working with you to develop a program that reflects the values and the goals of this community.



PHOTO: BCC

BCC youth at the December 1 tribute concert, from left: Eve Postrel, Shoshana Weinreich, Matt Postrel, Eli Filisov (top), Ashira Weinreich, Rae Filisov (top), Benjamin Timoner

Fran Chalin and the BCC choir Shirey Chayim at the December 1 tribute concert



PHOTO: BCC

Update on Our Home for the Future Capital Campaign

Brett Trueman, President

PHOTO: KENNA LOVE



As of this writing, the capital campaign committee has contacted most of the BCC membership, offering everyone the opportunity to participate in our shared dream of finding a new facility that better suits our growing needs. I am thrilled to report that our relatively small congregation of about 200 families has raised more than \$3.2 million so far! If someone had told me at the start of the campaign that we would do this, I never would have believed it. Our campaign consultant also never thought that we'd be this successful; we exceeded his initial estimate by almost 50%!

As I have said to many of you during our meetings, this outpouring of support shouldn't have come as a surprise. BCC is a special and unique place. I have no doubt that our members are more devoted and committed to our shul than is the typical member of almost any other synagogue. It's no wonder that we collectively stretched so much financially in order to bring our dream closer to reality. To all of you who have given so generously to the campaign, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks, as well as that of the Board of Directors and clergy.

If anyone reading this column has not had a chance to participate in the campaign and would like to do so, or if any of you would like to add to the pledge you have already made, please let me know by e-mail at president@bcc-la.org. BCC has received pledges ranging from \$100 to \$1,000,000. Most are payable over a period of 5 to 10 years, allowing members to give more than they otherwise could. Each of us chooses how much to pledge and how to pay it. While we have already raised more than we expected, real estate remains very expensive in Los Angeles. To give ourselves as many options as possible, we still need to raise as much money as we possibly can. Each additional pledge will bring us a step closer to achieving our goal and to making our next spiritual and communal home a reality.

In addition to its crucial role in fulfilling our shared dream, the capital campaign has had another wonderful effect...it has strengthened our bonds to each other and to BCC. This enhanced sense of community is evident at Friday night services, at religious and secular events, and wherever else we gather together. I am blessed to be a part of this extraordinary congregation and grateful for having been given the opportunity to serve as its president. Thank you all so very much for everything you do for BCC and for our community.

Kol tuv (all the best),
Brett

Tikkun Olam Update

Avram Chill

I write this on the Monday after our first tikkun olam presentation, on the subject of Judaism and the environment. We had a lively discussion, led by our guest speaker, Saran Kirschbaum of COEJLSC, the Coalition On the Environment and Jewish Life of Southern California, and our own student rabbi, Joe Hample, who taught us some of our tradition's teachings on preserving the Earth based on Hashem's charge to Adam to care for it.

I hope that people left with thoughts of things that they could change in their own lives to use our resources more wisely as well as what we can do collectively as a congregation, within the Reform Movement, as Jews and as dwellers on this Earth.

In future issues of G'vanim we will be running a small regular column with a few suggestions on "green" measures that we all can take in our lives.

On March 14th, the Shabbat before Purim, we will look at healthcare as a tikkun olam issue, and on April 18th, hunger. We hope to have two sessions each, one on Friday night and a second on Saturday afternoon leading up to havdalah.

Pam Postrel sings a solo at the December 1 tribute concert for Fran Chalin



PHOTO: BCC



PHOTO: BCC

Guest musician Rachel Siegel at the December 1 tribute concert for Fran Chalin

BCC Member to Headline Concert

Longtime BCC member Cantor Ellen Jaffe-Gill will perform in concert at Temple Ner Tamid in Downey on Saturday, Jan. 19, at 7 p.m. The concert, titled "An Evening of Song," also features Hazzan Jay Harwitt, cantor of Congregation Beth Shalom in Whittier, and soprano Leah Ellias. The program will include theater and cabaret music, songs in Hebrew and Yiddish, and popular tunes from the 1940s.

Ellen has been a member of BCC for more than 20 years and led her first Friday night services at BCC as a lay service leader. She was admitted to the American Conference of Cantors in 2006 and is in her third year as cantor in Downey.

Tickets are \$18 for general admission and \$36 for reserved seating. Temple Ner Tamid is close to the 5 and 105 freeways at 10629 Lakewood Blvd., between Florence Ave. and Firestone Blvd. For more information, please call (562) 861-9276 or e-mail templenertamid1@juno.com, or Ellen at matmid@earthlink.net.



PHOTO: SYLVIA SUKOP

BCC executive director Felicia Park-Rogers (right) and her partner Rachel Timoner at the reception following the December 1 tribute concert



PHOTO: BCC

BCC members Barry Wendell and Cantor Ellen Jaffe Gill sing a parody of Gershwin at the December 1 tribute concert for Fran Chalin



PHOTO: SYLVIA SUKOP

Rabbi Lisa Edwards, Fran Chalin, and BCC executive director Felicia Park-Rogers at the reception following the December 1 tribute concert



PHOTO: SYLVIA SUKOP

Fran Chalin, special guest star Gwen Stewart, Jeffrey Janis, and Tamara Kline-Rivera at the reception following the December 1 tribute concert



PHOTO: SYLVIA SUKOP

Bracha Yael, Davi Cheng, and BCC office administrator Victoria Delgadillo at the reception following the December 1 tribute concert

Mazel Tov

Please join the whole BCC community in wishing the following members a big "Mazel Tov" on their recent good news.

Debby Chanen, on her election as president of the 1100 member Southern California chapter of the Healthcare Financial Management Association, effective June 1, 2007.

Leslie Tuchman, who was presented with an award for her work in Poetry Therapy. Leslie is the recipient of the 2007 Art Lerner Poetry Therapy Award given for Excellence, Service and Dedication for work in the field of Poetry Therapy. The award was given to her by the Southern California Poetry Therapy Network.

BCC Student Rabbi Joe Hample, for his appearance in December on KPFK's queer show IMRU talking about Chanukah and Judaism and BCC and LGBT folks. Go to www.kpfk.org, then Monday, December 16 programs, find IMRU and click either on podcast at the left or "play" on the right, depending on your equipment. Yasher koach, Joe!

BCC's Vice President, Judge Donna Groman was featured in the "Judicial Spotlight" section of the Los Angeles Daily Journal on December 12, 2007. You can also read the article at BCC, on our bulletin board.

Dr. Allison Diamant, BCC Secretary, for being selected by the Jewish Journal as one of their Top Ten Mentschen of 2007. Wow!

And, **Rabbi Lisa Edwards** for appearing in a variety of publications: The newly published Women's Torah Commentary; Judith Plaskow's "Coming to Lilith: Essays on Feminism, Judaism, and Sexual Ethics, 1972-2003;" and on the Jewish Mosaic and IJSO websites, both of which published her World AIDS Day sermon given on November 30, 2007 (you can read it on BCC's website as well).

Please send your good news to the BCC office. We want to celebrate with you!

JANUARY 2008

TEVET/SHEVAT 5768

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	All events at BCC unless otherwise noted*	1 NEW YEAR'S DAY BCC OFFICE CLOSED	2	3 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study 7:00 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	4 6:30 pm Thai House Dinner 8:00 pm Shabbat Services Rabbi Edwards Robin Berkovitz	5 Ohr Chayim 10:00 am Children's Learning 11:15 am Adult Learning 12:00 pm Family Service
6 8:00 am (cook), 11:30 am (deliver) Project Chicken Soup 330 N. Fairfax	7	8	9 7:00 pm Executive Committee Meeting	10 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study 7:00 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	11 6:30 pm Telephone Service 8:00 pm Shabbat Services Rabbi Edwards Guest Cantor Ron Galperin	12 10:00 am Ohr Chayim Parent and Me 11:00 am Project Caring 3:00 pm Joe Hamble/Jody Myers Roots of Jewish Mysticism 6:30 pm (private home) Men's Havurah 10th Anniv. Dinner with Marcelo Gindlin
13		15	16	17 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study 7:00 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	18 8:00 pm Shabbat Services Rabbi Edwards Rabbinic Intern Joe Hamble	19 10:00 am Traditional Egalitarian Minyan and Dairy Potluck 2:00 pm Live at the Red Tent Shabbaton 8:45 pm Concert (see page 5)
20	21 MARTIN LUTHER KING BIRTHDAY BCC OFFICE CLOSED	22 TU B'SHEVAT	23 7:00 pm Board of Directors Meeting	24 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study 7:00 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	25 Ruach Chayim 7:00 Refreshments and Schmooze 8:00 pm Shabbat Services Drash by Rabbi Edwards Talk by Kerry Chaplin of California Faith for Equality	26 Ohr Chayim 10:00 am Children's Learning 11:15 am Adult Learning 12:00 pm Family Service 3:00 pm Joe Hamble Kabbalah in Prayer and Ritual
27 8:00 am Project Chicken Soup (see Jan. 6) 10:00 am (private home) BCC Book Group <i>Stardust Lost</i> 2:00 pm Circle of Life Workshop	28	29	30	31 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study 7:00 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards		

FEBRUARY 2008

SHEVAT/ADAR I 5768

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					6:30 pm Thai House 1 Dinner 8:00 pm Shabbat Services Rabbi Edwards Davi Cheng Drash by Rabbinic Intern Joe Hamble	2 Ohr Chayim 10:00 am Children's Learning 11:15 am Adult Learning 12:00 pm Family Service
3	4	5	6	7 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study 7:00 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	8 6:30 pm Telephone Service 8:00 pm Shabbat Services Rabbi Edwards Guest Cantor Stefani Valadez	9 10:00 am Ohr Chayim (See Jan. 5) Parent and Me 11:00 am Project Caring Country Villa Wilshire 3:00 pm Joe Hamble End of the Shtetl
10 8:00 am (cook) 11:30 am (deliver) Project Chicken Soup 330 N. Fairfax 3:00 pm Congregational Meeting	11	12	13 7:00 pm Executive Committee Meeting	14 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study 7:00 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	15 8:00 pm Shabbat Services Rabbinic Intern Joe Hamble Herb Toplan	16 10:00 am Traditional Egalitarian Minyan and Dairy Potluck
17	18 PRESIDENT'S DAY BCC OFFICE CLOSED	19	20	21 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study 7:00 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	22 8:00 pm Shabbat Services Rabbinic Intern Joe Hamble Drash by Daniel Mikelberg on AJWS trip to Ghana	23 10:00 am Ohr Chayim (see Jan. 5) 3:00 pm Joe Hamble After the Holocaust 6:30 pm (private home) Men's Havurah Veg. Potluck/Game Night
24 8:00 am (cook), 11:30 am (deliver) Project Chicken Soup 330 N. Fairfax 10:00 am (private home) BCC Book Group <i>The Book Thief</i>	25	26	27 7:00 pm Board of Directors Meeting	28 4:00 pm Telephone Torah Study 7:00 pm Torah Study Rabbi Edwards	29 Ruach Chayim 7:00 pm Refreshments and Schmooze 8:00 pm Shabbat Services Drash by Rabbi Edwards	

SEE **BCC-LA.ORG** FOR UPDATES AND CHANGES.

What do
you do
with
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A group of BCC women met at the home of Cecilia Quigley and Donna Groman to form a new Women's Havurah. Watch future issues of G'vanim and the BCC e-bulletin and seat bulletin for upcoming events for BCC women and their friends.

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