

TORAH . LIFE . COMMUNITY

The Shotar



TEMPLE BETH HILLEL, RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA Volume 21, Issue 3, December 2014. Kislev-Tevet 5775

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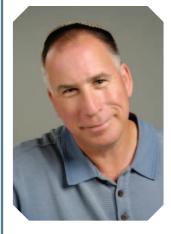
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A Message from Rabbi Dean



Here is the joke. When someone says, as they do every November or December, "Hanukkah is early (or late) this year." I always reply, "Hanukkah comes on the 25th of Kislev like clockwork every year. Christmas is late (or early) this year.

How we perceive things all depends on our perspective. How do we orient our lives? What dates matter to us? What holidays and rituals mark the important moments in our lives each year? Which leads me to the "December Dilemma"

which is really code for how do we reconcile being Jewish in a mostly Christian or christianized America.

First of all, I'm not sure there really is a December Dilemma. I think it's the kind of topic that newspapers, radio stations and TV news like to cover because the story never changes from year to year. It fills space and it sounds controversial but it really is not. What could be better? But what is the dilemma, really?

First of all, the dilemma is not a religious one. For families whose religious commitment is Jewish there is no dilemma at all. One would never celebrate Christmas because this holiday celebrates the birth of Jesus. This is as true for a family where both partners are Jewish (whether by birth or conversion) or in families where only one of the partners is Jewish but they have both made a choice to have a Jewish home. Hanukkah does not replace Christmas. It's a different holiday with a different message and a different ritual tradition that just happens to fall at approximately the same time as Christmas - give or take two weeks.

I imagine there might be a challenge to honor the tradition of a spouse whose family is not Jewish. But I think that this is something most families work out. You visit your grandparents who celebrate Christmas and you tell your children that this is the tradition in which you grew up, you love your parents and the memories of your childhood and you want your children to share this joy with their grandparents. This doesn't deny Jewish identity, it just recognizes reality.

Because the challenge is actually not about the holidays, it is about our own sense of identity. Who we are, who our family is, and what is important to us. Families of two faiths, or families where one partner has a strong sense of Jewish identity and the other does not, or families where both partners define themselves as secular are realities of modern American life. They are particularly a reality of modern American Jewish life. The question is, what kind of lives do we want to build and what kind of families do we want to have.

Also, as we become a more secular society Christmas becomes more of a cultural phenomenon. The theme of most Christmas movies and TV specials is not the birth of Jesus but the rediscovery of the importance of love and family. The primary ritual is no longer church worship but shopping for gifts and a family dinner. Christmas is become weighed down with a commercialism that strips away its religious message. The primary news coverage leading up to Christmas seems to be speculation about whether consumer spending will be greater or less than the year before.

So where does that leave us, regardless of our family makeup? Perhaps first we should count our blessings that Hanukkah in its difference, simplicity and modesty has not been totally commercialized. We can celebrate our Hasmonean ancestor's fight against Hellenistic oppression by lighting candles and eating delicious fried foods, whether latkes, sufganiyot (jelly filled doughnuts) or both. It is also important to remember that Hanukkah is about identity. What does it mean to be Jewish, a member of a distinct minority group in an open and compelling society? How do we engage with that society? How do we engage with our Jewish identities, however we define them? How do we engage with members of our families who are not Jewish in ways

that protect and honor our Jewish selves while respecting and honor them? These questions are not a "dilemma" and they are not reserved for December only. If we take our lives seriously they are the questions with which we grapple all the time for there are no permanent answers, only growth and change.

Rabbi Dean Kertesz



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Message from Our President Jane Durango

Dear Friends,

Chanukah, no matter how you spell it, is back again, and 2014 will soon be a memory. I don't know where the time has gone this year, but we still have a lot to do at TBH in December.

Our Latke Party will be on December 14th, and plans are moving forward. Please reach out to Dana Meyer to help in the kitchen, to Marilyn Hertzberg to help with the arts and crafts part, to Neoma Kenwood to help with the children's crafts. Judy Windrix will have Chanukah items such as candles as well as beautiful Judaica gifts.

Chanukah has always been so much fun for us at TBH. Watching the guys make and serve the latkes and trimmings and hanging out has always made it special for me. Although our children left us long ago, being able to celebrate with our TBH family has given it a new meaning for Pablo and me since our grandchildren are far away in Evanston, Illinois.

Right after the Chanukah party is our Food for Thought project. Please reach out to Jeff Romm, Michael Nye or Neil Zarchin if you are able to help us with this key TBH project. Helping our Richmond community's fight against hunger is really worthwhile.

Help is always needed with the souper kitchen. This year our day is Wednesday, December 24th. Please reach out to Jane Kaasa if you are able to help.

The Kol Truah Concerts mentioned in the last Shofar have been cancelled and will be rescheduled for a later date.

The secular year is coming to an end. It would be great if you would like to participate in a committee or volunteer to help in all of the events coming up. We will have bagel brunches, GRIP souper kitchen days, a Purim Carnival, a Seder and many more.

So my friends, thank you for all of your love and support of TBH this year. I hope you have joyous holidays.

L'shalom,

Jane

My favorite potato latke recipe appears on the next page.

Potato Latkes (from Joan Nathan's The Jewish Holiday Kitchen)

10 medium potatoes 2 medium onions 2 or 3 medium eggs 1/4 cup bleached all purpose flour or matzah meal Salt and pepper to taste Vegetable oil

- 1. Peel the potatoes if the skin is coarse; otherwise, just clean them well. Keep them in cold water until ready to prepare the latkes.
- 2. Starting with the onions, alternately grate some of the onions on the large holes of the grater and some of the potatoes on the smallest holes. This will keep the potato mixture from blackening. Press out as much liquid as possible and reserve the starchy sediment at the bottom of the bowl. Return the sediment to the mixture.
- 3. Blend the potato mixture with the eggs, flour, salt, and white pepper.
- 4. Heat 1 inch of oil in a frying pan. Drop about 1 tablespoon of mixture for each latke into the skillet and fry, turning once. When gold and crisp on each side, drain on paper towels. Serve with yogurt, sour cream, sugar, or applesauce.

From the desk of Cantor Fran:

Have you always wanted to learn how to chant from the Torah? Have you put it off feeling that it might be too challenging to do? Let this be the time you tackle this most wonderful skill. Join me for a fun eight week adult education course on Torah trope. You will learn how to sight read the trope symbols, giving you the tools to chant anywhere in the Torah. I will touch on the history of Torah chanting. We will practice together in class, and then we will pick a service date to chant for the community. I will provide all materials. The only prerequisite is basic Hebrew reading (decoding only, not necessary to be able to translate).

We will meet for eight evenings for 1 hour and 15 minutes starting the first week in February. The days are TBD depending on the participants' schedules. When I know who will be attending, we'll take a survey and decide which weekday evening will work best.

Interested? Email me at - franbur@earthlink.net. Use the subject: **Adult Trope class** in your email

I look forward to studying with you!





Join us for our Annual Hanukkah Party!

Sunday, December 14, 2014

Display and sale of beautifully designed work from TBH Craftspeople and local Artisans
11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Latke Lunch Begins at 12:30 p.m.

- Traditional latke lunch with all the trimmings
- Celebratory candle lighting
- Children's activities
- Hanukkah treasures from the Gift Shop



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Jeffrey & Kumi Hadler	12/12
Gary & Helene Class	12/21
Steve & Fran Welstand	12/21
Marc Teitelbaum & Naura Soares	12/29
Neil & Roxann Zarchin	12/31





Laura Taub	12/3	
Kieran Kemp	12/5	16th birthday
Sidney Irving Feurst	12/8	
Marc Teitelbaum	12/10	
Michael Seal, M.D.	12/24	
Jennifer Jones Horton	12/25	
Sheri Tattenham	12/26	
Holvis Delgadillo	12/28	
Joe Baer	12/29	

Notes from the board meeting of Nov. 19, 2014

- Progress has been made on refurbishing the adult ed meeting room. It has been painted and new carpeting and wiring have been installed.
- A morning *Shabbat* service is planned for Saturday, Jan. 31.
- The publicity committee has been working on a membership survey to learn how members heard about TBH. So far, the results range from seeing the website to looking in the phone book. Several people commented that they were drawn by the warmth.
- The recent bagel brunch was very well attended, with more than 30 people, mostly temple members. A program with an interfaith theme is planned for January.
- Packing boxes for the Food for
 Thought program is expected to begin after
 the Chanukah party. Each recipient family is
 expected to get 5 boxes, and 120 families will be
 served. So far the Religious School has gathered
 110 jars of peanut butter.
- It appears that GRIP does not need our volunteer help on Christmas Day. No alternative venue has been found.

Submitted by Roberta Alexander, secretary

PORTRAIT OF CANTOR HOWARD

An informal portrait photo of Cantor Howard has been added to TBH's 'Brag Wall' where pictures of past board presidents and such are displayed. It's an informal picture because, well, Howard wasn't a stiff, formal guy. He was a patient teacher, a wise leader, a grand voice and a generous friend.

Now he's a beloved memory.

A group of congregants arranged for the photo to be printed and framed and a plaque created. It's a gift to the congregation. The donors would like to remain anonymous.

It's hanging on the south wall of the corridor between the temple office and the rabbi's study.

Tzedakah

"If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?"



Sherbie Aberle, in loving memory of Alan Sagan Barbara Polikoff, in Honor of 11th yr. anniversary of his de

Tzedakah-Tikkun Olam:

Paula Wolper

Office Equipment Fund:

Dorothy Langer, in loving remembrance of Albert Jaffe Bob & Arlene Lisby in loving remembrance of Albert Jaffe & Robert Woody Joe & Janice Malailua, in loving remembrance of Robert Woody & Albert Jaffe

Cantor's Discretionary Fund:

Jay & Barbara Weidenfeld, in loving memory of Sylvia Leben

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund:

Harvey & Rona Tananbaum, in appreciation of Rabbi Dean & Rosh Hashanah Services Jay & Barbara Weidenfeld, in loving memory of Sylvia Leben Carol & James Cunrad in Honor of Rabbi Dean Laurie Greenhut & Family in honor of Rabbi Dean Kertesz

Food for Thought Fund:

Gary & Helene Class
Eric Husby-Gerry
Debra Salan, in remembrance of Martin, Beryl, Sol & Necia Salan
Pearl Wolffs, in memory of Agusta Wolffs Brody, Walter Wolffs & Samuel Sweet
Paula Wolper
Josh & Elaina Genser





Yahrzeits

May Their Memories Be For A blessing

Ruby Dulberg, mother of Bernie Dulberg	12/1
Harry Guss, grandfather of Saralynn Nusbaum	12/2
Joseph Morris Leib, father of Alice Chanowitz	12/2
Walter Dresser, father of Jannie Dresser	12/3
Jacob Serling, grandfather of Jennifer Jones Horton	12/5
Joel Paladino, a beloved member of our congregation	12/7
Morris Rosenberg, a beloved member of our congregation	12/7
Thomas Waxman, father-in-law of Michele Waxman	12/8
Rubin Leben, grandfather of Barbara Weidenfeld	12/14
Seymour Freifeld, father of Doug Freifeld	12/9
Annie Kiefer, mother of Harry Kiefer	12/9
Rosita Levy, a beloved member of our congregation 12/10	
Fannie Bloom, a beloved member of our congregation	12/12
Rudoph Kamerling, father of June Kamerling	12/12
Bob Coven, great grandfather of Kieran Kemp	12/13
Harry Dulberg, father of Bernie Dulberg	12/13
Harry Spiegel, grandfather of Jeff Hadler	12/13
Sam A. Manger, father of Irene Morgan	12/14
Blanche Sagle, mother of Allan Sagle	12/14
Roy Trumbull, beloved husband of Pat Trumbull	12/14
Sybil Creper, cousin of Roberta Alexander	12/15
Gabriel P. Ehrmann, a beloved member of our congregation	12/18
Alexander R. Weiss, beloved Father of William Weiss	12/19
Yetta Weiss, beloved Mother of William Weiss	12/20
Joseph S. Schmuckler, father of Helene Class	12/21
Elton Brown, beloved son of David & Cheryl Brown	12/25
John Maberry, a beloved member of our congregation	12/25
Sara Katz, grandmother of Hallie Friedman	12/26
James Osburn, father of David Osburn	12/26
Miriam Serling, grandmother of Jennifer Jones Horton	12/26
David Nelson, father of Carl Nelson	12/27
Lilyan Manger, mother of Irene Morgan	12/28
Mori Genser- Pagle, daughter of Clara-Rae Genser,	12/28
Sister of Josh Genser	
Rose Marcia Greenberg, aunt of Barbara Weidenfeld	12/31
Irwin Straus, brother-in-law of Henry Linker	12/31

All Wrapped Up By Roberta Alexander

My new scarf is bright red with pink stripes, and is both long and wide. I am looking forward to wearing it when the weather gets cold enough.

I knit it myself, starting it shortly after a car accident when I had more "free time" than I knew what to do with ... as long as I didn't try to move my bruised purple and green self around too much.

Hence the knitting.

I learned how to knit as a child, but never became very proficient. That may have been due to the fact that I was a left-handed girl taught by a right-handed mother. It was one of many little problems we ran into over the years where one or both of us had to translate and reverse things in our heads.

This scarf followed the pattern—no pun intended—of most of my knitting projects. I started it, then put it down and ignored it. Even forgot about it. Eventually—a month, three months later—I picked it up again and resumed. My yarn box contains a number of small colorful rectangles, the corpses of dead knitting projects.

Perhaps it was the bright red and pink that kept me from giving the future scarf a premature burial. In any event, over the years it grew long enough for me to wrap it comfortably around my neck.

Since, despite my fondness for traditional crafts, I am a modern woman, I then went to YouTube and learned how to make fringe. It's probably a sad testimonial to the fact that I'd never finished a scarf before, and so had never learned how to make fringe. Now I have thick pink fringe.

I also notice that the scarf has an unusual pattern. I'd go so far as to say that it's unique and would be very hard to duplicate. This is not because I have mastered one of the intricate knitting patterns that I admire when I see it flowing from the needles of a more experienced artisan. I'm strictly amateur; I made it through Knitting 101—and have been stuck at that level ever since.

The unusual pattern is due entirely to the fact that by ignoring the project for months at a time I also forgot where I left off. Presumably there had been a grand plan at one time, but I never wrote it down. Was this a knit two-purl two row? And was it five rows before I switched

stitches? When had I planned to change colors? Were all the stripes to be the same width? Did I want to add a few rows of black here and there? Did I even have any black yarn of the same weight?

And on and on.

I had no clue. So I simply picked up the needles and started up again, perhaps in the middle of a row if that's where I'd stopped.

Truly, it looks like the work of an amateur, or possibly someone demented. But it also looks warm and cozy, a gift for myself from myself.

In fact, I see in the scarf a kind of life map. This scarf is not what I anticipated when I cast on those first stitches. It reminds me that much of my life is not what I expected when I set out in one direction or another. How much has developed from paths I had never planned to take?

It looks like the scarf, with a zig here and a zag there, not to mention a few changes in direction. Maybe that's not a bad way to make a scarf.

When I finished graduate school I turned down a job at a suburban newspaper outside of Cleveland. I'm not entirely sure why, but think it was related to the complications of being a single mother who needed to find an apartment, schools, doctors and day care in a city where I didn't know a soul. In the way of the news business in those days, most of the staff at that paper would have been quite young and seen the paper as a starter job. They'd be looking to move up, to the Plain Dealer, perhaps. My home life would set me apart. I wouldn't be going out for a drink with my colleagues; I'd be worrying about how I could make cupcakes for my kid's class and still get the laundry done.

So was that decision a mistake? Who knows? Instead I went west, where I had some family, and tried to settle in. Within a year, there were no longer family members around, but by then I'd quit smoking, found a couple of friends and made a start at creating that new life. Perhaps this period is reflected in that chaotic patch on the scarf where it is not clear if the knitter was coming or going.



Special Shabbat Service with Shir Appeal - Friday, Jan. 2, 2015

The entire congregation is invited to come and enjoy *Shir Appeal*, the award-winning, Jewish co-ed a cappella singing group from Tufts University, which will be joining us for Shabbat services on Friday evening, Jan. 2, with selections from Hebrew pop and Israeli rock to traditional/liturgical melodies and English songs with religious themes. With almost two decades of experience, the singers have been featured four times on the three volumes of the Best of Jewish A Cappella, and four times on the highly acclaimed Best of Collegiate A Cappella album – the first non-secular and only Jewish group ever to appear in the series.

Shir Appeal will sing a number of prayers during the service and then perform a half-hour concert during the oneg following services.

It's the first Friday of the new year, so come for the potluck at 6:30, then stay for services and a lovely concert. It's a great way to start the secular new year.

HOLD THE DATE

Sunday, January 11, 2015

Bagel Brunch

Subject to be anounced

Service of Temple Beth Hillel Community Bulletin Board

Do you have something to buy, sell, rent or exchange? Do you have services to offer? Are you looking for services? Housing? Employment? Or do you have these available? Post a notice in the Community Bulletin Board in the Shofar. This is a service in support of our community members. Send notices to Louise Snitz at llsnitz@gmail.com. Notices must be received by the Shofar deadline, which is the 10th of each month for the following month.

HELP WANTED

The <u>Hanukkah Latke Party</u> is December 14 -- Contact Dana Meyer to help in the kitchen; Marilyn Hertzberg for the artisan craft booths; Neoma Kenwood for children's crafts.

Food for Thought will be packing and delivering food boxes December 15 -19 – *Contact Jeff Romm to help*.

<u>The Caring Community needs meals for our larder</u> – contact Marilyn Hertzberg.

Feed the hungry at the **GRIP Souper Center**. Our next day is December 24 – Contact Jane Kaasa.

Help with the project to **reconfigure the Religious School** – *Contact Larry Fox.*

Help organize **Bagel Brunches and other cultural activities** for the congregation – *Contact Jane Durango.*.

Sponsor an oneg to celebrate Shabbat – Contact Bobbi Nadler or Judy Windrix.

Shelve and/or process books for the **Children's Library** – Contact Laura Taub.

Let the Board know of your <u>ideas to improve our community</u> – *Contact any Board member.*

Develop an incident-response plan - Contact David Brown.

We have openings for <u>representatives to the Midrasha Board</u> – Contact Andre Moskowitz.

TODAH RABAH Thank you

To Ron Codron, Owner of Abbey Carpet and Floor of El Cerrito,

For his donation of carpeting, padding and installation in our new study and meeting room.

We are extremely grateful and will be enjoying his gift for many years to come.

Special Thanks To

Rabbi Dean Kertesz and Carla Cassler for hosting the Open Sukkah.

Jane and Pablo Durango; Larry and Michael Fox; Carl Nelson; and Michael Nye and Pepper for raising money for GRIP by participating in the Harmony Walk and Run to End Homelessness and to all congregants who donated money to GRIP in support of the walkers.

Trish Elliott for arranging for the speaker for our <u>Shalom Bayit Bagel Brunch</u> and **Jane Durango** for organizing the brunch.

Neoma Kenwood, Holvis Delgadillo and Jane Kemp

for organizing and designing our gardens.

Neoma Kenwood for organizing, and with **Selma Goldberg** and **Emily Specter**, for assisting our Religious School students in making dinner for the <u>GRIP Family Housing Program</u>.

Jane Kaasa for planning and shopping for our day at the GRIP Souper Center.

Arnold Faerber for shopping and transportation, and with Adolph Kamil, Malka Helfman, Margie Marks, Laura Taub, Barbara Weidenfeld, and Neil Zarchin

for preparing and serving lunches.

For our services:

Eric Husby-Gerry for his <u>musical contributions</u>;

Michael Nye for baking delicious challahs for us;

and Margie and Alan Marks; Bill Hartman; and Hannah Gilberg and David Weiss

who provided us with wonderful onegs.

All who have returned the TBH Marketing Survey.

December 2014

Kislev-Tevet 5775

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Office Closed	Office Closed	R.S. Hebrew 3:40-4:30pm (#1) 4:30 - 5:25pm (#2)	4	Tot Shabbat 6:00 - 6:30 p.m. Shabbat Potluck Dinner 6:30-7:30 p.m.Shabbat Family Service 7:30 - 8:45 p.m.	6 10:15 AM Torah Study
9:30 AM Religious School Adult Ed w/ Rabbi Cooking For GRIP Mazel Tots 10:00 am - 12 noon	8 Office Closed	9 Office Closed	R.S. Hebrew 3:40-4:30pm (#1) 4:30 - 5:25pm (#2)	11	12	13 10:15 AM Torah Study
9:30 AM Religious School Hanukkah Latke Party and Craft Fair Mazel Tots 10:00 am - 12 noon	Office Closed	16 Erev of Hanukkah - 1st Candle	17 Board Meeting - 7:30 p.m. Hanukkah R.S. Hebrew 3:40-4:30pm (#1) 4:30 - 5:25pm (#2)	18 Hanukkah	7:30 PM Shabbat Evening Hanukkah Service Hanukkah	20 10:15 AM Torah Study Hanukkah
No School-Winter Break Hanukkah Winter Break - Midrasha Dec. 21 - Jan 4	Hanukkah Office Closed WCC Winter Recess	23 Hanukkah Office Closed WCC Winter Recess	Office Closed Souper Center WCC Winter Recess	25 Christmas Office Closed WCC Winter Recess	26 Office Closed WCC Winter Recess	27 10:15 AM Torah Study WCC Winter Recess
No School-Winter Break WCC Winter Recess	Office Closed WCC Winter Recess	Office Closed WCC Winter Recess	31 New Year's Eve Office Closed WCC Winter Recess	Nov 2014 S M T W T 2 3 4 5 6 9 10 11 12 13 16 17 18 19 20 23 24 25 26 27 30	F S 1 7 7 8 3 14 15 11 12 18 19	Jan 2015 T W T F S 1 2 3 6 7 8 9 10 13 14 15 16 17 20 21 22 23 24 27 28 29 30 31

January 2015

Tevet-Shevat 5775

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 7 8 14 15 21 22	Dec 2014 T W T F S 2 3 4 5 6 9 10 11 12 13 16 17 18 19 20 23 24 25 26 27 30 31	Feb 2015 S M T W T 1 2 3 4 5 8 9 10 11 12 15 16 17 18 19 22 23 24 25 26	20 21	New Year's Day Office Closed WCC Winter Recess	Tot Shabbat 6:00 - 6:30 p.m. Shabbat Potluck Dinner 6:30-7:30 p.m.Shabbat Family Service 7:30 - 8:45 p.m. WCC Winter Recess	3 10:00 AM Torah Study
No School-Winter Break Adult Ed with Rabbi	5 Office Closed	Office Closed	7 R.S. Hebrew 3:40-4:30pm (#1) 4:30 - 5:25pm (#2)	8	9	10:00 AM Torah Study
9:30 AM Religious School Bagel Brunch Mazel Tots 10:00 am - 12 noon	Office Closed	Office Closed	R.S. Hebrew 3:40-4:30pm (#1) 4:30 - 5:25pm (#2)	15	7:30 PM Shabbat Evening Service	17 10:00 AM Torah Study
Adult Ed with Rabbi No R.S. or Midrasha	Martin Luther King, Jr. Office Closed WCC School Holiday	Office Closed	21 Board Meeting - 7:30 p.m. R.S. Hebrew 3:40-4:30pm (#1) 4:30 - 5:25pm (#2)	22	23	24 10:00 AM Torah Study
9:30 AM Religious School Mazel Tots 10:00 am - 12 noon	Office Closed	Office Closed	28 Office Closed R.S. Hebrew 3:40-4:30pm (#1) 4:30 - 5:25pm (#2) Souper Center	29	Midrasha Winter Retreat (Jan. 30 - Feb.1)	31 10:00 AM Torah Study 5th Saturday Shabbat Service

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December 2015 Kislev-Tevet 5775



Thank you to Amalia Bek-Waxman for her presentaion on the subject of Domestic Violence in the Jewish home.