



Rabbi's Message

Rabbi Lisa Hochberg-Miller



It is the week between Thanksgiving and Hanukkah, the liminal space between recognizing our blessings- the light in our lives- and thinking about how we bring more light into darkened places. I am feeling grateful for the amazing congregation that surrounds me—you—for you are the people who make this pandemic manageable. Just as in person, Shabbat lifts my spirits and brings me joy, as I look in your faces, and we sing and share a tangible warmth. I watch our students on Zoom with their Torah School teachers and I am so grateful for the cadre of colleagues who are Jewish teachers, who allow their passion for Judaism to dictate their Sunday mornings and to tackle a new brand of creativity: teaching online. My gratitude includes Board members, who wrestle with how to connect with temple members during trying times, with lay leaders like Nancy who continue to engage in what is not “business as usual” for our Jewish institution. I’m grateful for those of you who respond to our invitations to learn, and grow in spite of a pandemic, who know that life must go on.

The pandemic and the political tensions of our world force us to encounter every holiday with new eyes. Hanukkah has the potential to strengthen our souls this Kislev, when we think about our ancestor’s response to fear, darkness and the political uncertainty of their day. They lit candles. They called upon the source of Light to ignite the light of courage within them. We too get to meet Hanukkah this year and allow it to chase away the darkness of economic despair and an unchecked plague that will leave so many homes in sadness this holiday season. We get to light the hanukkah and remember an Eternal One who has done wondrous things for our people in years’ past at

this season. From these places we gain hope, strength and courage, to be among those who fight darkened spirits with joy.

Hanukkah may not be for any of us, the rollicking celebration of prior years. But we are called to make it special real and responsive to 2020. Light your Hanukkah with your temple community each night! (More on that!) Call friends and have a virtual Hanukkah party. Send donations (modern-day gelt!) to worthy charities. Make latkes and light your Hanukkah. You have no place to go- sit and enjoy the candlelight all evening long. And be infused with the strength of the Maccabees- to not give up hope when the night gets dark.

TBT Membership Update

By Keren Zaks

On behalf of the Board and the TBT community, we are delighted to welcome the following new and returning members to our congregation, as of November 2020: Trey Barber, Dr. Katrina Crenshaw-Upah and Dr. Roxanne M Upah-Crenshaw, Freida and Martin Harary, Marsha Roberts, and Libby Whitt and Cole Jenkins.

We are so glad you joined our Temple family!

If you “see” any of our new or returning members on Zoom (or when we finally get to be together again in person) please say “Hello!” and give them our warm TBT Welcome!

President's Message

Nancy Marcus



As we move into the end of the year, and I reflect, I can only think, wow, what a year. I am so impressed with how our congregation has responded to the events of 2020. And how we continue to respond. Here are some highlights:

- Membership is strong and many members have increased their dues to assist in these challenging times. High Holy Day pledges were stronger than we expected. Please see the list of donors elsewhere in this Shofar.
- We have not missed a single service and that in itself is a major accomplishment. Our High Holy Day services were successfully streamed with little complication. Services will continue to be zoomed for the foreseeable future. We are anticipating the time when the Temple reopens and are researching various streaming options. The topic of reopening has certainly dominated the conversations among Temple leadership. Please read the article in this Shofar written by Pam Small wherein she discusses the safety protocol of reopening the Temple.
- Adult Education under Deborah Pollack has continued with some great classes, including the multi-week course by Cliff Wilcox, The American Jewish Experience in the 20th Century through Film, that still has some classes remaining. As well, there are book groups scheduled for the new year. Be sure to refer to the weekly T’Kiah for updates.

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Shofar



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Education & Family Programs

Rabbi Lisa Hochberg-Miller



Jewish living and learning goes on, even in an age of Covid! Torah School began virtually this year just after the High Holy Days, with amazing teachers, students and creativity. Our teachers were passionate that they wanted to continue to teach and that they could use online materials to create fun and educative classes for their students. And they have! With Allison Silverman Quiroz bringing our Mishpacha families together and teaching our Tk-K students on Sunday mornings, and Tassi Benjamin teaching our 1-2 graders and our 5-6th graders, and Gil Ramot teaching our 3-4th graders, Torah school meets weekly, for shortened class times.

It was important to us to respond to families who wanted to enhance Jewish life at home, keep educating their children, but for whom being online was not a good option. That is where Taylor Paskin stepped in, as our new Home Shul Coordinator! A number of our families chose this option, and so, in conjunction with each of the teachers, Taylor has been producing home materials to allow families to learn together a course of instruction similar to what their classmates are learning on zoom. Families come pick up at Temple a month's worth of learning activities.

These are stressful, overwhelming times for young families. Our goal as a Torah School was to ask: What can we do to support our Jewish families

this year? The spirit and energy of our teachers, of our Torah School committee and our community has been wonderful. Beginning in November, we re-introduced monthly Torah School Shabbat services with Rabbi Lisa and Cantor Robin, so students can pray, sing and stay connected.

On any given Sunday you will find our 5-6th graders learning about Jewish Heroes with Tassi, our 3-4th graders learning their Torah stories with Gil, our 1-2nd graders making their tzedekah boxes with Tassi, and our TK-K students, with parents nearby, learning about Torah and ritual items. During the week, our 3rd-6th graders have one-on-one zoom Hebrew lessons. Our B'nai Mitzvah students work weekly with Sharon Spielman, our tutor, and beginning in December, with Cantor Robin. We feel good that we have been able to provide meaningful Jewish education and family support for the majority of our Torah School families as we navigate this pandemic as a community.

Marisa has stepped back from her duties as Director of Education, for health reasons. Torah School is on-course thanks to the great work of Danielle Stoyanoff, Torah School Coordinator, Taylor Paskin, our Torah School committee chair, Rabbi Lisa, and Sloane Burt, VP of Education and Family. We wish Marisa well. If you have questions about Torah School, please direct them to Rabbi or Danielle.

President's Message

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Our Director of Education Marisa has taken an extended leave of absence due to medical reason. She and her family remain beloved members of our community.

I want to extend my hearty congratulations to the House Committee. Through their hard work and effort, our Temple is one of less than 85 recipients out of over a thousand applicants to receive a grant of \$100,000 from FEMA administered through the State of California. The purpose of the grant is for enhanced security measures for our facilities including new cameras and a state-of-the-art entry system. The paperwork and research for this grant was significant and over the next year, the work to implement will be equally significant. Additionally, major asphalt and concrete repairs were recently made to portions of our driveways, parking lot and sidewalks, under the guidance of the House Committee. And again, they put in a lot of work in that regard. Major kudos and big thanks to the House Committee.



Children's World & TBT Preschools

Marion Levin-Welch



December is here and we hope that a better climate is enveloping us. We, at the preschool, have been open since August and the teachers, families and kids are super happy, involved, and giggling which only carries over to us the adults. Even though we follow the Department of Health, Licensing and CDC, we manage to rise above what is asked of us. We clean, we mask, we have 6 outdoor areas so kids can be outside 50% of the time. We clean again and maintain cleaning all areas after each class uses an area or manipulative items. We do not allow parents on campus, no co-mingling between classes, take temperatures of the kids and teachers each and run a covid test on paper to make sure no one has left the state or country and has not been exposed to someone who had covid.

These are trying times but the resilience and hard work of those around us show the human spirit at its best. We are grateful to TBT to allow us to remain open, to the parents for sending the children and the teachers for all their hard work in maintaining the protocol to stay open. And yes, we get quite a lot of curriculum accomplished during the hours for children staying in the mornings or all day. We thank Adonai for guidance and care and helping people who need to work and to have a safe place to place their child. It has been challenging with setting up details to implement but it is so worth it.

We hope you had a lovely Thanksgiving and you look forward to celebrating Hanukkah, be it virtual or in person. Look at the positives that people display, the reason to celebrate the "now"

and the ability to overcome the challenges that have been put forth in the last few months with all that is going on. Please stay safe and healthy and enjoy every moment.

Shalom

Marion Levin-Welch M.A.



ADULT EDUCATION & PROGRAMS

Deborah Pollack

OWe've almost managed to make our way through 2020, a year that I look forward to reading about at some future date in a book by an historian who writes incisively and factually. Meanwhile, we have a new year on the horizon.

Whether remote or in person, learning persists at TBT and here are some adventures for which you can start planning:

AMERICAN JEWISH EXPERIENCE IN THE 20TH CENTURY AS SEEN THROUGH FILM

Clifford Wilcox, Ph.D.

Continues Tuesday evenings, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m., Dec. 1, 8, 15

This course will look at the experience of Jewish Americans over the 20th century through the lens of film. In December the series will focus on "Goodbye Columbus" (1969), "Crimes and Misdemeanors" (1989), and "Crossing Delancey" (1988). Through lectures and analysis of extensive clips from these films, we will examine main currents and developments in 20th-century Jewish history. Registration on the TBT website required. Members \$10; non-members \$15 includes all 8 sessions.

SHORT STORY DISCUSSION

Deborah Pollack

Tuesday, December 22, 2:00-3:00 p.m.

If you're interested in participating in our discussion, please send Deborah an email (listed in TBT Annual) and I'll send you a link to the story as well as a Zoom invitation.



Brotherhood

Ron Halpern



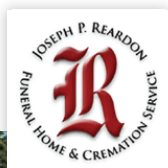
The Brotherhood is still keeping busy during these uncertain times of dealing with Covid, recent elections and planning events for the future. We have stayed together each month having our monthly Zoom meetings. There are plans to have outdoor meetings as soon as it is safe.

I would like to thank Bob and Mary Braitman for stuffing all the envelopes with the letters we use inviting you to place ads in this year's Annual. Thank you Joel Goldenberg for managing it. This year we will include family photos of many of the congregants.

Coming off a successful comedy night a couple of months ago, we are looking for other events, guest speakers and activities. In addition, we will hold some Q & A discussions on Jewish current events.

The Brotherhood continues to run Family to Family feeding the needy each month and giving out food to the families each week from our food pantry we have on premises at TBT. A big shout out for Randy Merin, Jay Kosoff, Russ Charvonia for giving their time to make this happen. I wish everyone a Happy Hanukkah and New Year for you and your family.

My best to all,
Ron Halpern



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Message from VP of Governance

Pan Small

Your TBT leadership has struggled over the last few months as the restrictions have been eased in Ventura. The overwhelming questions are: Should we reopen, can we ensure the safety of our congregants, and what would reopening look like? The following list was an easy one to compile:

1. Masks must ALWAYS be worn inside. The mask must cover your mouth and nose. Attractive masks are preferred as we cannot see your warm smiles.
2. Social distancing of a minimum of six feet must be strictly observed. The greater the distance the better. No hugging, kissing, hand shaking, or congo line dancing.
3. Use the hand sanitizer as you enter and exit. Cruise ships use the same dispensers, so this gives you a chance to practice for a fabulous vacation once we are able to travel again.
4. No food or beverages will be served. I NEVER thought I would write those words for TBT events. If enough of you are interested, I will investigate having snacks available for you to take out and eat in your cars.
5. If you are feeling at all unwell, DO NOT

COME TO TBT. It may be a mere cold, allergies, or muscle aches from walking your dogs three times a day, but it is better to be cautious.

6. If you are able, avoid using the bathrooms. If you must, close the lid before you flush, wash your hands while singing "Staying Alive," and use a paper towel to open the door.

Pretend we are all Pig Pens, the character from Charlie Brown, but instead of being surrounded by a cloud of dirt, we are surrounded by a miasma of our breath, and our breath is primarily how we pass the virus to one another. A great concern is how do we provide enough ventilation in our Sanctuary and Social Hall, to keep everyone safe? The longer we are in a room together, the greater the risk of passing the virus between us. Do we shorten our services? Is this something we want to do and if so, what would we cut out? We have resisted reopening until we have answers and solutions to these questions and problems. Leadership has spent and continues to spend many hours on these issues. The health and welfare of every member of our community, congregants and staff, remains our greatest concern.

Women of TBT

Your Sisterhood

Ann Kerman and Kathy Randall

Greetings dear sisters of Women of TBT,

We are sending much love and good vibrations your way. We know it's been a tough year on many levels. We will get through this! And your sisters are here for whatever support you need. Do know we are thinking of you and missing you. Never hesitate to email or call either of us or any member of our board if you would like to chat.

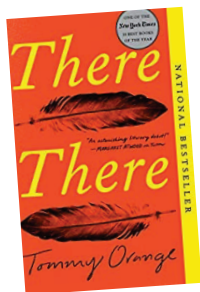
On that note, we are excited to announce a new Women of TBT initiative. The idea is to create a new way of connecting with each other. We are calling it, "Sister Circles" and our own Erica Walsh is spearheading this. Be on the lookout for an email coming your way! We are so excited to explore new ways of connecting with each other and we are sure you will be too!

We are also working on ideas for some Zoom meetings and workshops that will incorporate interactive or hands-on involvement on your end. We know a lot of us are "Zoomed out", but we are looking at ideas that will be fun and fulfilling. Until then, thinking sweet thoughts of you and making plans on how we can return to some of our regular activities as soon as it becomes safe to do so.

Warmly,
Ann & Kathy
womenoftbt@gmail.com

JANUARY SHABBAT MORNING DISCUSSION

There There by Tommy Orange



Tommy Orange's wondrous and shattering bestselling novel follows twelve characters from Native communities, all traveling to the Big Oakland Powwow, all connected to one another in ways they may not yet realize. Among them

is Jacquie Red Feather, newly sober and trying to make it back to the family she left behind; Dene Oxendene, pulling his life together after his uncle's death and working at the powwow to honor his memory, and fourteen-year-old Orvil, coming to perform traditional dance for the very first time. Together, this chorus of voices tells of the plight of the urban Native American—grappling with a complex and painful history, with an inheritance of beauty and spirituality, with communion and sacrifice and heroism. Hailed as an instant classic, *There There* is at once poignant and unflinching, utterly contemporary and truly unforgettable.

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A “quick note” from Robin

By Robin Faigin

Shabbat Zoom BTS (Behind the Scenes)



Over the past months our Zooming congregants get more comfortable using features such as mute/unmute, virtual backgrounds, and chatting in the chat box, to enhance their Shabbat community experience. I, too, have grown in my skills and Zooming setup, and I thought maybe some of you might be curious to see “BTS” (behind the scenes) of your intrepid cantorial soloist.

The main issue I had when we started to Zoom our services was the sound quality, or lack thereof. I got input from folks that my singing and guitar were cutting out, competing with each other, and it just didn't sound great. Obviously, this was a big concern for me, and I soon learned Zoom is not made for music - it's made for speaking. It “thinks” that sustained sound, like a guitar chord, is a background noise like a fan, for example. The default settings are geared to cut out background noise. Thanks to YouTube tutorials I learned audio settings to allow sustained sound to be transmitted.

The other major element to improve the sound quality was to use a microphone other than the one in my laptop. Laptops are definitely not intended to record or transmit music, and I got help from some of our tech-savvy congregants (thank you Rick Bloom and Alan Kirschbaum!) to select an appropriate microphone. So, I now use a USB “fancy-schmancy” microphone that not only transmits my voice much better, but it has a separate input for the guitar so the two sound sources don't compete with each other. We also learned that a hard-wire internet connection provides a more stable signal than Wi-Fi, which helps both with sound quality and also not getting “kicked off” Zoom quite so often.

The next goal was for me to appear to either be in the sanctuary or in some other setting that is more conducive to prayerfulness than the tiny extra room I'm using at home for Zooming. I have learned to use virtual backgrounds that make me appear to be in front of beautiful stained glass in our sanctuary, or in Jerusalem, or in front of an idyllic pastoral sunrise, or any number of delightful settings. However, I am actually standing in my little “studio” space at home. My green screen consists of a bedsheet that we fortunately had left over from one of our kids' rooms, tacked into our ceiling. Thankfully, the sheet conceals much of the chaos behind me, although it doesn't prevent my dog and cat from creating chaos underfoot! I typically face a window on Shabbat morning and use the morning light on my face. At night, I use two small lights so you can see my face. Here's my evening setup.

Now that you have seen “BTS”, I hope you'll be able to forget you ever saw this, and lose yourself in the music and imagery during services.



ZOOMAKKAH with TBT!

Hanukkah is December 10–18, 2020!

Join us for 8 nights of Hanukkah ... via Zoom! It's Zoomakkah! Sign on, bring your hanukkiah close, and we will light, and sing, and share in Hanukkah songs all 8 nights! We will even make sure that our TBT Hanukkiah is lit in our sanctuary, so we can be just like the Maccabees, making sure that the lights of the Holy Temple are lit! Look for our emails inviting you to sign up to lead our blessings, and with our links to Zoomakkah! With special fun each night, we will be together for the Festival of Lights.

Hanukkah Drive-Thru Sunday, Dec. 6, 10–11 a.m.

Put on your Hanukkah sweaters and socks and drive thru for games, gifts and giggles with your teachers and Torah school friends! Bring canned goods and coins for tzedakah! 10:00–10:30 a.m. Hanukkah Sing-

a-Long with Cantor Robin in a tailgate, socially distanced celebration, 10:30–11 a.m.

Nefesh Mountain Hanukkah Concert

TBT's Hanukkah gift to you- free admission to a concert with one of the most popular Jewish recording artists, Nefesh Mountain! Combining an eclectic style of Bluegrass, American Roots, and contemporary sound, this will ignite your 3rd night of Hanukkah. Look for registration details in the Shofar and in the T'kiah for this special online concert.

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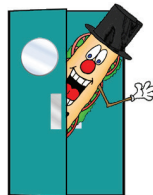
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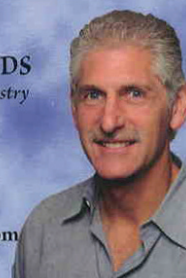
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