

# The Star

Bi-monthly newsletter from  
Congregation Beth Elohim  
in Acton, Massachusetts



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## September/October 2024 • Av/Elul 5784/Tishrei 5785

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## In this issue...

*L'shana tovah! As much as we try to cling to the warmth and easy days of summer, those familiar words will soon be ringing in our ears, Thankfully we are eased in our transition to autumn by words of joy from Rabbi David -- who shares our theme for this year "Joyously Jewish at CBE". And, indeed, we hope you truly find joy in this issue of The Star. We interviewed two of our earliest members and one of our best-known volunteers. We have poetry, apples, a wedding and —a baby! And two fabulous questions from The People of Chelm that you just cannot miss. We hope you feel the love for CBE like we do here -- and best wishes for a happy and healthy new year!*

## Message from Rabbi David



Dear CBE Community and Friends,

This year, our theme will be *Joyfully Jewish at CBE*. Joy is a critical aspect of Jewish life, so much so that there are at least a dozen words in Hebrew for joy. Most of us know *simcha*, which also means a joyous occasion like a wedding or *B'nai mitzvah*. *Oneg* also means joy, as in celebrating the joy of Shabbat with some fruit and cookies after services. The Jewish wedding service includes many more words for joy.

How can we focus on Joy during such turbulent times, when the future of America, Israel, and the Jewish people seem so fraught and uncertain? Perhaps it would be more fitting to take off the “J” and just have it be the year of “Oy!”

In the Jewish tradition, fear and trepidation are balanced out by Joy. Rosh Hashanah represents this balance. In the Torah, Rosh Hashanah is called *Yom Teruah*, a day of sounding the Shofar on *Yom HaDin* – the Day of Judgment. The Shofar is also a call to battle, a warning siren, and a call for introspection. The Talmud says, “The content of the blowing of the shofar is a broken heart.” The Shofar, and Rosh Hashanah, according to these texts, focus on fear, trepidation, and even mourning.

But the sound of the shofar also marks a festival of joy – “And on the day(s) of your rejoicing, your appointed times and New Moons, you are to blow a blast on the trumpets...” Ezra and Nehemiah also taught that Rosh Hashanah is not a day for mourning and weeping. “Hold your peace, for the day is holy; do not be sad!” (Nehemya 8:11). In the Torah, Rosh Hashanah is described as both “a day of *teruah*” of fear and apprehension and also a day of great joy/Simcha.

*Joyfully Jewish*   
 at CBE   
Congregation  
Beth Elohim

In Jewish tradition, Joy is a mitzvah, a moral and psychological imperative. We are told to “Serve God in Joy! (Psalm 100:2)) – to express our identities and religious feelings in joyful ways. Reb Nachman of Brazlov (1772–1810) who suffered from terrible depression, emphasized the necessity of joy. “God, I stand beaten and battered by the countless manifestations of my own inadequacies. Yet we must live with joy. [We must] overcome despair, seek pursue and find every inkling of goodness, every positive point within ourselves – and so discover true joy. Aid me in this quest, O God. Help me find satisfaction and a deep, abiding pleasure in all that I have, in all that I do, in all that I am.”

Joy can serve as an acknowledgment of life and a great act of moral resistance to terror. Former hostage Noa Argamani’s abduction from the Nova dance party was captured in a terrifying video. She spent 245 days in captivity before being freed by the IDF and held a “Return to Life” dance party last month. Noa started the party by acknowledging the ongoing war and the fact that over a hundred hostages, including her partner Avinatan Or were still being held in Gaza. She continued saying the cheers of her friends and family, “...At the same time, I’m happy to celebrate life itself with all of you, to remember that we have to value every day in this life, we have to celebrate every moment that we’re here.”

***Joyfully Jewish at CBE*** means having a place to express our Judaism proudly, and safely. It is a place to come together and celebrate Jewish life and learning, despite the terrible antisemitism that has arisen since October 7th. Now is the time to embrace and be proud of our heritage, and to find joy and comfort in it.

Wishing you and your families a Sweet and Happy New Year,  
Rabbi Braham David

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## My Experience as a CBE Volunteer: Rick Green

*In this series, we feature CBE volunteers, asking them how they got started and how their volunteer role has impacted their connection to CBE. In this issue we are thrilled to feature Rick Green, the editor of our sister publication The Star-Lite, published every Wednesday evening to keep us on top of everything going on at CBE.*

*Rick is frequently seen in and around our building — as well as Acton and beyond — camera in hand, capturing our favorite and most enduring (or most embarrassing?) moments. We don't know who took this photo of Rick but we think it captures him perfectly!*



*A last note about Star-Lite. We don't know how we'd ever got along without our weekly updates. Despite COVID, vacations, weddings, and moving, Rick hasn't missed a week since 2014!*

**How long have you been a CBE member?**

Shelley and I joined in 1987. Shelley immediately jumped into helping with religious school. I immediately jumped into a 10-year period of doing not much at CBE but the classic "dad transporting the kids Sunday mornings." Fortunately for me, that slowly changed!

**When did you first volunteer for the synagogue? What made you decide to take on this job?**

I don't know why I volunteered, or was likely volunteered, to join the Social Action committee headed at various times by Louise Bielinki and Judy Kramer. In 2016 I joined Na'aseh.

**What other roles have you had at CBE?**

Thanks goodness I was eventually arm-twisted into joining the Brotherhood. I wound up on the board, culminating in a fun stint as Brotherhood co-prez with the delightful Don Hoban.

**What have been the most memorable or rewarding experiences doing this volunteer role?**

My most memorable experience was performing a full-costume CBE dancing spectacle as one of the Blues Brothers with Don Hoban on April 22, 2007 (a date that shook the music world and literally shook the floor of the CBE social hall.). My daughters never knew their father could do a rapid hop and shuffle. My feet never knew.



**What are you most proud of accomplishing as a CBE volunteer?**

My most rewarding CBE experience came from being arm-twisted by Linda Minkoff and Sue Wachter to take a turn editing the all-important monthly bulleted list called "*Star-Lite*". They asked if I could add some color and human interest angles, to somehow portray the vitality of the CBE community. Everyone should thank Shelley for helping me not go over the edge with the joke of the week and silly photo captions.

**What is one of your biggest takeaways from your volunteer experience?**

Whoever invented the cliché "What you get out of it, is what you put into it", must've been a member of CBE. A big part of my life experience and joy come from stepping out from the comfort zone and tapping into involvement with the world of CBE.

**Anything else you'd like to mention?**

In coming months I hope to bring on an editorial assistant to add their own creativity to the *Star-Lite* and to share the fun of creating this helpful publication. Look to future issues of *Star-Lite* for details, or write to me at [webmaster@bethelohim.org](mailto:webmaster@bethelohim.org).

*Below: Rick taking one of his classic selfies, with fellow members of the CBE Brotherhood —Jonah Laufer, Elan Reisman and Gary Mauser — at a Brotherhood beer brewing event some years back; Don Hoban and Rick rocking the social hall as The Blues Brothers; and, finally, Rick's most recent movie role -- Men in Black -- co-starring with Gary Kushner -- just last week in front of CBE.*





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## New Series! Our Earliest Members — this issue, Marvin and Karen Gould

*In our last issue we initiated a new series: to interview members who helped bring CBE into being in 1969. In asking these folks to tell us about their origins with CBE, we hope to also learn more about our congregations' humble beginnings -- and what it meant to have*





*a Jewish community born in the suburbs of Acton. This month we feature Marvin and Karen Gould:*

### **Beth Elohim Long Ago**

Karen and I both had a Jewish background. She from a large reform synagogue in Rochester, NY, and me from a small conservative-to-orthodox synagogue in Clinton, MA. We were married in 1973 and moved to Acton. As the owner of Gould's Clothing I knew about a small Jewish group that met in a small building in Maynard. At that time the membership was 30–40 families. We were all about the same age in search of a temple to serve our varying needs as we raised our young children. We had a new leader who worked part time, Lewis Mintz. The temple grew under Lewis' leadership. We were involved in the initial planning and fundraising for Beth Elohim.

Over the years our 3 children all went to Beth Elohim for their education and Bat and Bar Mitzvahs. Our oldest had Rebecca Jacoby as her teacher for almost all her training. Rebecca kept changing the grade she taught. I served on the board for a term as membership chairman during this time.

As the congregation grew, we were involved and contributed to the expansion of the current facility. The membership remained close and going to services meant we got to see so many of our friends. We attended Lewis' ordination and the inauguration of the new building with so many of the members in attendance.

We appreciated the close camaraderie of the temple when we first joined. It was a very young group at that time. As we grow older and our children now have families of their own, our needs from the temple have changed as has our active participation. We continue to support both the Acton and Clinton temples.

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*We asked synagogue administrator, Miriam Beit-Aharon, if she had any ideas for adding some seasonal inspiration to this issue. And we are so glad that we did! She told us that she enjoys writing poetry and offered to write a poem or two. What follows are the delightful results -- thoughts to remind us of the complexity of the season, as well as its simple joys, as symbolized in the roundness of an apple.*



### Apples

I appreciate a shady tree  
though summer heat's behind us  
my mind now like a busy bee  
more apples lie before us;  
Rounded like another year,  
we'll sweeten what's ahead.  
Don't ignore the sour dear  
or rotted by the hedge;  
For sour can be candied here  
the past not be forgotten.  
This is all that gets us through  
this ride of hay and cotton.

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### Cider Donuts are also Round

Must a year be only like an apple?  
many other things are round;  
cider donuts, pumpkins, caramels,  
I need not leave it like it's found  
I'll try to make it even better —  
something richer, more profound.



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## The People of Chelm Want to Know...

*For years the "People of Chelm" column has challenged The Star readers with questions drawn from the long and rich history of Jews and Judaism. We are*





*Illustration by Maurice Sendak.*

*delighted to continue this tradition, with abundant thanks to Bob Ferrara and Waky.*

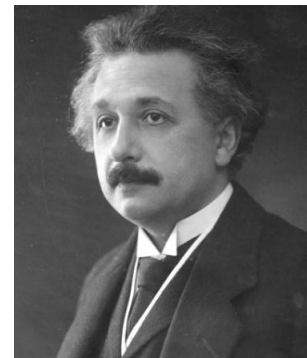
## QUESTION:

In our busy lives, we do not often take time to appreciate the long, rich, and diverse history of Judaism. Many scholars have contributed greatly to this history, and the first question below honors one the very greatest. Jewish history has been shaped even more by the millions of unnamed Jews who maintained Jewish community and learning through the numerous challenges of the centuries. The second question honors a small group of unknown Jews who brought their faith to a new land, the land that became America.

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### 1. Albert Einstein is arguably the best-known scientist in history.

Many no longer know that he identified very strongly with the Jewish people, though he was not an observant Jew. He was very supportive of Zionism's aspirations, especially the establishment of the Hebrew University. Because of his worldwide stature and involvement in Jewish affairs, he was offered both the Presidency of Israel in 1952 and, much earlier, the leadership of Hebrew University. He graciously declined both. However, his love for Jewish tradition was unequivocal.



There is a famous quote attributed to him, in which he enumerates the traits he so treasured in this Jewish tradition. In that quote, which of these do you suppose he mentioned - 1) the desire for personal independence, 2) a veneration for the past, 3) an almost fanatical love of justice 4) the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, and 5) the broad and deep literacy of Jewish people.

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2. In the month of September, three hundred and seventy years ago, the first Jewish community was founded in the territory that ultimately became the United States. Fittingly, this first Jewish group came to New York City, then a Dutch settlement called New Amsterdam. There were only 23 people, and – like the millions who followed them centuries later from the ghettos and shtetls of Eastern Europe and elsewhere around the globe – they were refugees seeking a better life and freedom from persecution. If only they could have imagined what their haven would become - the great metropolis that is home to the world's largest Jewish population. From what land did these pioneers Jews emigrate? Was it England, Spain, Brazil, Russia, France, or Barbados?

*September*  
**1654**

## Lifecycle and Milestone Events in Our Community

### A grandbaby!

*On July 16, Joseph Leo “Joey” Foley arrived to the delight of parents Micky and Brian Foley, joining big sister Lila – and making Waky a bubbe for the second time. Mazel tov to the whole mishpacha!*



### A wedding -- and a new son-in-law!

*On August 17, Shelley and Rick Green celebrated the wedding of daughter Michaela to David Litwin in the courtyard of the Boston Public Library. Here we share photos of Shelley, Rick, Michaela and David at the rehearsal dinner; the couple on the elegant BPL staircase; Michaela and sister Hannah outside in Copley Square -- and Rick walking his daughter down the aisle. Mazel tov!*







Has your family celebrated a recent simcha or milestone? Send us up to 5 photos with a brief description; and we will make a selection to include in our next newsletter.

Email [communications@bethelohim.org](mailto:communications@bethelohim.org).

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## What's happening at CBE this month?

Visit our [online calendar](#) for up-to-the-minute programming.

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## Donations



The congregation thanks our members, their relatives and friends, and the larger community for recent donations to CBE either online or by check. If you do not see your donation, please look for it in our next donations email or issue of *The Star*, or contact [communications@bethelohim.org](mailto:communications@bethelohim.org).

#### **Adult Education Fund**

Paul Linet / In honor of the birth of Joseph Foley, grandson of Ellen Waks

#### **Amy Naparstek Israel Scholarship Fund**

Chips & David Naparstek / In honor of Linda and Denis Friedman on the occasion of their 56th anniversary

Chips & David Naparstek / In appreciation of Chips's sister, Andrea Harris

Andrea Harris / In honor of Cantor Jacob Harris and Cantor Rachel Slusky on their engagement

Andrea Harris / In honor of Jacob Harris, who has fulfilled the requirements for being ordained as a cantor

Chips & David Naparstek / In honor of the engagement of Jake Harris and Rachel Slusky

Chips & David Naparstek / In memory of Chips's mother, Rosalie Harris, in observance of her yahrzeit

Gary & Judy Budiansky

#### **Cantoral Fund**

Daniel & Courtney Carp / In honor of Cantor Sarra in thanks for helping guide Adam through his Bar Mitzvah

Gary & Judy Budiansky

#### **Chesed Fund**

Lauren Solomon / In memory of Albert Formaggio, father and father-in-law of Joseph and Jaymi Formaggio, grandfather of Coby and Joshua Formaggio

Lauren Solomon / In memory of Katrina Fowler, sister of Kathie Becker and sister-in-law of Bob Becker

#### **Choir Fund**

Lauren Solomon / In gratitude to Judy, the choir and our musicians, for enriching our lives

#### **Darchei Shalom Fund**

Acton Coffee House

#### **General Fund**

Congregation Beth Elohim Sisterhood / For refinishing the pew from Rodoff Shalom

Judy & Les Kramer / In honor of Danya Zimmer Bloomstone's leadership this year

Judy & Les Kramer / In honor of Michelle Siegert's leadership this year

Daniel & Courtney Carp / In honor of The Sisterhood Challah Bakers in thanks for two gorgeous & tasty challot for Adam's Bar Mitzvah

Susan Kemp / In memory of Susan Kemp's mother, Jane Wahl Shultz

Alan & Peggy Berko

#### **Na'aseh Social Justice Fund**

Joseph & Rosalie Oliveri / In honor of Linda and Denis Friedman

Joseph & Rosalie Oliveri / In memory of Adam Kenger  
Ethan Sokol & Kristine Fong / For the Mini Food Pantry  
Gary & Judy Budiansky

#### **Rabbi's Discretionary Fund**

Daniel & Courtney Carp / In honor of Rabbi David in thanks for his help guiding Adam through his Bar Mitzvah

Jaime & Jeffrey Roberts / In honor of Sloane's Bat Mitzvah, with thanks to Cantor Sarra Lauren Solomon / In memory of Ruth L. Morton, mother of George Morton and mother-in-law of Lauren Rosenzweig-Morton  
Gary & Judy Budiansky

#### **Religious School Fund**

Daniel & Courtney Carp / In honor of The Forseter, Newman, Rubin, & Wright Families for their help on Adam's Bar Mitzvah day

#### **Ritual Fund**

Daniel & Courtney Carp / In honor of Heidi Lovitz in thanks for helping guide Adam through his Bar Mitzvah

#### **Yahrzeit Plaque**

Bob & Deena Ferrara / In honor of Marie Leving

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## **The People of Chelm Want to Know...**

### **ANSWER TO QUESTIONS POSED ABOVE:**

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1. "The pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, an almost fanatical love of justice and the desire for personal independence - these are the features of the Jewish tradition which make me thank my stars that I belong to it". These were Albert Einstein's words describing his feelings about Jewish tradition and culture. Like all good Jews, he expressed his beliefs not just in words like these but with deeds. Here are but two examples. In 1933, he renounced his German citizenship for political reasons and emigrated to America. Toward the end of his life, he bequeathed his archives and scientific papers to Hebrew University. Jews everywhere can rejoice in the memory of this remarkable scientist and humanist, one who was selected as *Time Magazine's* "Man of the Century".

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2. In 1654, the first "American" Jewish community was established by a group of 23 refugees from Recife, Brazil. Individual Jews certainly had come to America and the New World before this, but this was the first permanent community on American territory. These refugees established the nation's first Jewish congregation, Shearith Israel or "remnant of Israel",

which is still an active congregation. In 1630, Holland captured Brazil from the Portuguese. The Dutch were then, as now, among the most hospitable of nations to the Jewish people and so they invited Jewish settlement in Brazil. Recife soon had a substantial Jewish community. When the Portuguese recaptured Brazil, they expelled the Jews, most of whom returned to Holland. But some found new homes in the Caribbean and one

boatload migrated to the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam, where they and allies in the Dutch West India Company overcame the fierce opposition of the colony's strict Calvinist governor, Peter Stuyvesant. This “remnant” thus became the cornerstone of the world’s greatest Jewish community. By the way, the first New England Jewish community was founded not long after, in 1658 in Newport, Rhode Island, by a group of 15 emigrants from Barbados. Both these groups were predominantly Sephardic Jews.



## Resources

CBE's [Chesed Committee](#) | Contact us in a time of need

[18 Doors](#) (formerly InterfaithFamily of Greater Boston)

[Anti-Defamation League incident reporting](#)

[CJP \(Combined Jewish Philanthropies\)](#)

[CJP SeniorDirect](#)

[Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life](#)

[Hadassah of Nashoba Valley Facebook](#)

[Hebrew College events](#)

[Jewish Bereavement Support Group](#)

[JewishBoston.com](#)

[Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston](#)

[Jewish Family Service of Metrowest](#)

[Keshet](#) | A national organization that works for full LGBTQ equality and inclusion in Jewish life

[Mayyim Hayyim | Living Waters Community Mikveh](#)

[Oneinfifty.org](#) | BRCA awareness, education, and support

[Yad Chessed](#) | Emergency financial assistance to Jewish individuals and families in need

[Yerusha.com](#) | A Website for Older Childless Jews

Visit the [Resources](#) page on our website for our complete resource list.

## Feedback/get in touch with us!

Let us know what you think! What do you like or not like about our format or content? If there is someone or some effort or group you'd like to see featured,



please write to [communications@bethelohim.org](mailto:communications@bethelohim.org).

*L'hitraot* (until next time),

*The Star* editorial and design team — Gary Budiansky, Maida Fund, Rick Green,  
Miriam Beit-Aharon, Beth Schrager and Lauren Solomon

Visit us at [www.bethelohim.org](http://www.bethelohim.org)



Congregation Beth Elohim | 133 Prospect Street | Acton, MA 01720 US

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