

# The Star

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



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## May/June 2024 • Nisan/Iyyar/Sivan 5784

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## In this issue...

*Shalom and welcome to the May/June issue of The Star! By now, we've had our fill of matzah brei (can you ever have your fill of matzah brei?) and we're outside enjoying the spectacular spring weather. This issue ended up being a little shorter than most (phew!), giving us all more time to get off our screens and out of doors. But there is no shortage of wonderfulness in the pixels that follow. Make sure to read the message from our co-presidents Lindsay and Laura about a few dates that should be on your radar (note that all CBE events are publicized in our weekly sister publication The Star-Lite). Get to know one of our hard-working board members. Then, off to the ballpark with CBE's own softball team. Next, a super special treat – an interview with Naomi Blumberg David. Don't forget to read The People from Chelm or look at the heartwarming B'nai Mitzvah photos to end on a feel good moment. Am Chai Yisrael – may we thrive in joy and peace!*

## Message from Our Co-Presidents



We hope that you had a lovely Passover and are enjoying the spring weather. Passover was filled with joy as we remembered our exodus from Egypt and the freedom we as Jews have to observe and practice our religion. For many of us that feeling was diluted as we kept the hostages in Gaza in our hearts, and all of those who do not have the freedoms we enjoy. Concerns about the continued rise of antisemitism evident at anti-Israel protests on college campuses across the country weigh heavy in our hearts, even as we celebrate. At this challenging time we must embrace our community at CBE and remember that, even though we are all experiencing the war differently, we can all say that as ONE CBE we are proudly Jewish and support the Jewish people.

There will be several opportunities this spring to come together as ONE CBE beginning with the annual meeting on **May 9th 7:00–9:00 pm** when you can join us on [Zoom](#) to hear about all the wonderful happenings around the synagogue this past year and our hopes for the future. The discussion will include presentation and voting on the FY25 budget and slate of officers for the CBE Board, and additional information about proposed changes to the CBE constitution that, amongst other goals, enable the Board of Directors to think more strategically about the future of the congregation.

On **May 19th at 11:30 am**, we will come together as ONE CBE at a [luncheon to celebrate Education Director Beth Goldstein](#) who has made significant impacts on our community over the past five years and will be greatly missed when she moves out of state this summer.

Finally we hope to see all of you at the [CBE ONE Community Rockin' Auction](#) on **June 2nd at 6:00 pm** where we will celebrate our community, through food, music, and the opportunity to bid on some amazing items.

These are only a few of the spring events that will bring us together. Our community is vibrant, strong and active. Check the *Star-Lite* or the [CBE website](#) for more details about the events above and other ways to get involved.

Next time you're at CBE, please take a minute to see all the recent changes, including the (almost) completed Toddler Playground at the ELC entrance, the new blinds in the Social Hall, Swing Space, and Community Court, all the grounds cleanup results and new plantings, and the most important activity, although the hardest to tell, the new roof! Dozens of people have worked hard to make all this happen, we want to thank everyone who's been involved, especially the Operations Committee for keeping all of these, and many more, projects going.

During this difficult time for the Jewish people, may we come together as one community as we go from strength to strength.

Laura Kelmar and Lindsay Rosenman  
CBE Co-Presidents  
[president@bethelohim.org](mailto:president@bethelohim.org)

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## Meet Susan Welt, CBE Board Member and VP of Education



*One of the earliest goals for The Star, set by our editorial team, was to better acquaint the community with those among us who are volunteering their time and energy on the CBE Board of Directors.*

*This issue we are thrilled to feature Susan Welt, our VP of Education.*

Just as it is for many Jews, education is a top priority for me and my son. It is not just about learning the Torah as written in the *V'ahavta*, but it is about learning about Jewish history and culture, the ability to think and discuss diverse ideas, and the value of a community. Education is not just about teaching others as – through the process – educating others can enlighten oneself. It is a two-way street and part of a lifelong journey.



CBE is a diverse community with a long history of pursuing life-long learning opportunities for the congregants and the surrounding communities. Through our many programs we share our and promote an inclusive environment where we all can belong.

I have been honored to represent the congregation for about one year now as VP of Education. I accepted this position as I want to help guide an educational program for all children – including those enrolled in Religious School grades K-12 – and their families that is consistent with the goal of providing meaningful Jewish education and engagement. I value the opportunity to collaborate with the CBE Clergy, Director of Education, other Board members, and chairs of various synagogue committees to ensure implementation of educational programs that facilitate active engagement and connection with CBE and their Jewish identity.

## “The Tribe” Softball Team – An interview with Andrew Gruskay



*The Tribe, at the first game of the 2024 season: Back row: Dan Forseter, Eric Mariasis, Steve Frank, Josh Kaplan, Dan Carp, Scott Jelinsky; Front row: Andrew Gruskay, Rob Martin, Ethan Sokol, Gary Kushner. Team members not pictured: Seth Barron, Taylor Curtis, Brian Hess, Ron Honig, Jonah Laufer, Zackary O'Dell, and Neal Silverman.*

## The History of The Tribe

### When was the team formed and whose formed it?

Our CBE softball team was formed around 2010. Leann Shamash and Chuck Pollack started the team. I was about the 3rd recruit.

### What is the softball league that the team belongs to? Has the league grown over the years?

Our team plays in the [Men's Shul Softball League](#). It's a rather large league that serves the Boston and surrounding towns. The league has 4 divisions: A, AA, AAA, and Majors. The Tribe plays in Division AA.

### How many players did the team start with?

The Tribe got off to a tremendous start with 32 players. That didn't give the players much playing time on the field for each game, unfortunately. We are now at 17 players which is just about right!

### Has The Tribe ever been a finalist in league competition?

We did really well last year. We won our division title. We have a great team and we hope to duplicate that feat this year.

## The Tribe Today

### How is The Tribe team managed?

Ethan Sokol and I are team coaches and do all the management for The Tribe.

### What is the 2024 team roster?

Our roster consists of the following players: Seth Barron, Dan Carp, Taylor Curtis, Dan Forester, Steve Frank, Andrew Gruskay, Brian Hess, Ron Honig, Scott Jelinsky, Josh Kaplan, Gary Kushner, Jonah Laufer, Eric Mariasis, Robert Martin, Zackary O'Dell, Neal Silverman, Ethan Sokol

### How many teams are in your division? What area do they cover?

There are Division AA teams as far east as Boston and as far west as Westborough and Acton. There are a total of 8 teams in our division.

## The 2024 Season

### When did the season start?

The first game of the season was on Sunday, April 21st. We finish the season regular play on June 23rd.

### Where are games played when in Acton?

Our home field is Nara Park, Acton.

### How far might the team travel for a game?



Our June 9th game is with the Boston team, playing on their field in Brookline. That's about the furthest game from the synagogue.

#### How are the team statistics in recent years?

We didn't play during Covid. Since we resumed competing our team has been getting better each year.

#### Do you appreciate fans coming to the games? Where do fans find the season schedule?

We love to have our fans in the grandstand to cheer us on. You can find our 2024 schedule at [https://www.msslonline.org/schedule/team\\_instance/9261433?subseason=912210](https://www.msslonline.org/schedule/team_instance/9261433?subseason=912210)

Also look for game announcements in *Star-Lite*.

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## Catching up with Naomi Blumberg David



*As you may recall, last issue we profiled Naomi Katz Mintz – longtime CBE member and wife of Rabbi Emeritus Rabbi Mintz. This issue we set out to complete our "Tale of two Naomis: the wives of the CBE Rabbis!" – and we bring you a more recent addition to our community – Naomi Blumberg David, wife of our Rabbi Braham David. Anyone who has been blessed by Naomi's warm smile at a Friday night Kiddush knows how fortunate we are to have her in our community – but few of us have yet had the opportunity to get to know her better. We are thrilled that she agreed to be interviewed by The Star. We look forward to seeing more of you, Naomi!*

Let me begin by saying how grateful Rabbi David and I are to be part of the CBE community! We have felt welcome and included from the very first day. This is a special congregation and we are honored to share in worship, learning, friendship, and service.

**Your father is the Rabbi Emeritus at Temple Shir Tikva in Wayland. What was it like growing up as a rabbi's daughter? Did you ever think that you might marry a rabbi?**

Yes! My father, Rabbi Herman Blumberg, whom many of you met during Rabbi David's installation, was the rabbi at Temple Shir Tikva for almost 20 years. He and my mother, Paula Blumberg, a clinical social worker, have been married for 63 years. I'm the oldest of three – you may also have met my awesome brothers during the installation. Our family is very close, and luckily, we all live in the area. Growing up as a rabbi's daughter had its perks. You can't get in trouble in Hebrew school, and you can hang out in the rabbi's office if you've had enough of services. It wasn't in the plan 'to marry a rabbi', but here we are!

Here are some things I learned growing up in a rabbi's house:

- Try to show up for people, it will mean a lot to them.
- Meet someone where they are in life, not where you wish them to be.
- Be present for someone who is hurting, it will help them feel less alone.
- Do the right thing; let it reflect who you want to be as a person.

**We understand that you work in global health. What important work that is! Can you tell us about it?**

My background is in international development and public health. I work at Abt Global on an international health project. We support developing countries in strengthening their health care systems. For example, in Ukraine we are working to expand telemedicine services during the war. In Colombia, we are helping Venezuelan migrants access the health system so they can receive care, irrespective of their legal status. While I traveled for many years, I now work from home as a writer telling the story of our project's work around the world. Someone has to be around to keep an eye on the teenagers, right?

**We hear that you are raising a future guide dog. Tell us about how you got interested in that and how it's going for you and your family.**

Many of you know I'm a puppy raiser of future guide dogs. This means teaching the pups from 8 weeks to 18 months all about good house manners, being polite in public, and attending puppy class! Some of you have met our sweet pup, Miss Yoki, who will be 'going off to college' in May for professional harness training. We hope she makes the cut (many don't)! We look forward to cheering her on when she's ready to help a person who is visually impaired gain independence and mobility.

A college student who is blind told us that when he used a cane, people kept their distance and were even a little afraid of interacting with him. But when he got his guide dog, people on campus started coming up to him to talk and wanted to greet his super well-behaved pup. Having a guide dog helped this young man feel less isolated, make new friends, and



participate in student life in a completely new way. Yes, it will super sad to say goodbye to Yoki. But I also know she'll be changing someone's life.







*The David family: Pukar, Rabbi David, Asha, Naomi, and, of course, Miss Yoki.*





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



*Illustration by Maurice Sendak.*

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

### QUESTION:

The news of late has not been uplifting, but we still have much to be thankful for. Spring has sprung and our days are getting longer. So here is a lovely and timely question, drawn not from the teachings of the great Jewish scholars and academics but from the material of one of our Hebrew School’s Gimel (third grade) class. What do the following have in common: lighting the first candle on a holiday; having a thirteenth birthday; eating the first peach of the

year; going to seder; hearing really good news; or seeing a friend for the first time in thirty days? All of these events provide an occasion to do something special. What is that something? If we cannot figure it out at first, perhaps we should ask (or at least think like) a third grader.

Ponder your response – and find the answers below.

## Lifecycle and Milestone Events in Our Community

### B'nai Mitzvah:

*On March 30, Abram Shlesinger celebrated becoming a B'nai Mitzvah. Below see Abram on the bimah with Rabbi David and Cantor Spierer, as his grandfather, Morton Shlesinger, and his parents Andrew Shlesinger and Mary Di Nino look on (scroll down for another photo of Abram with his grandfather).*



*Abram's sister Eden Shlesinger places a crown on the Torah scroll held by congregant Frank Cohen while Rabbi David looks on.*





*Abram with grandfather Morton Shlesinger during the Candle Ceremony. Two candles already lit were in memory of Abram's grandmother Marilyn and his Uncle David.*



*Abram with grandparents Vincent and Elaine Di Nino.*



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. If you do not see your donation, please look for it in our next donations email in early June, or contact [communications@bethelohim.org](mailto:communications@bethelohim.org).

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

Debbie Namias / In memory of Ruth Morton, beloved mother of George Morton and mother-in-law of Lauren Rosenzweig-Morton

### **Chesed Fund**

Lauren Solomon / In memory of Adam Kenger, son of Ronni Kenger

Sandy & Jeff Haber / In memory of Adam Kenger, whose kindness and compassion made the world a better place

### **Choir Fund**

Chips & David Naparstek / In honor of Barbara Weiss on the occasion of her senior recital

Ed & Nancy Kleiman / In honor of Judy Kramer, the choir, and the musicians

### **General Fund**

Chips & David Naparstek / In memory of Ruth Morton

Chips & David Naparstek / In memory of Adam Kenger

Daniel Ross / On behalf of Alan & Peggy Berko

The Linden Family / In memory of Allen B. Linden

Kathie & Robert Becker / In memory of Ruth Morton

Kathie & Robert Becker / In memory of Adam Kenger

Pam & Jonah Laufer / In memory of Ruth Morton

### **Rabbi Lewis Mintz Fund**

Dan & Shelley Klein / In memory of Ruth L. Morton

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

Barry & Stephanie Hand / For the sale of chametz

Dan & Shelley Klein / In honor of Rabbi David

Ed & Nancy Kleiman / For the sale of chametz

Lauren Solomon / For the sale of chametz

Leslie & William Schroeder / For the sale of chametz

### **Ritual Fund**

Chips & David Naparstek / In appreciation of Kerry Shrives having evaluated an old megillah we had

Ethan Sokol & Kristine Fong / In memory of Arielle Sokol

Jessica Rosenblatt & Taylor Curtis / For the Purim Dinner

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

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

As many third grade Gimel students would know, all of these events provide an opportunity to say the Shehecheyanu, the blessing recited over something new or special in time. The English translation and spelling of the blessing itself vary but the sense is always very close to this: *"Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who has giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this day"*. The events range from lighting the first candle to eating the first fruits of a season and celebrating holidays; the Shehecheyanu always marks a special moment in time. The rabbis and scholars among us also know that the tractate in the Mishnah dealing with blessings, Berakot, prescribes several situations when this blessing is to be recited, such as moving into a new house or getting new kitchen utensils. Given that the Mishnah was codified almost two thousand years ago, this lovely prayer is woven very deeply into the fabric of Judaism, and that is indeed a blessing.



## 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](#)

[Oneinforty.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).

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)





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